The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXXXII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1931 No. 3424

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Five dollars per annum postpaid in the United States and Mexico; to Canada, $5.50; and to foreign countries of the Postal Union, $6.00.

THE NATION, No. 20 Vesey Street, New York City, Cable Address: NATION, New York. British Agent of Subscriptions and Advertising, Miss Gertrude M. Cross, 23 Brunswick Square, London, W. C. 1, England.

THE QUARREL between Mr. Hoover and the Senate over the question of drought relief seems likely, as we go to press, to be settled by the adoption of the $20,000,000 loan "compromise." If Secretary Hyde's interpretation of the terms of the proposal is correct no part of the fund could be used directly for the purchase of food for hungry farmers and their families. Thus the main purpose of the compromise from the Senate's standpoint would be defeated. An examination of the loan plan reveals the correctness of Mr. Hyde's position. As it is now written the farmer would have to pledge some of his goods as security for the loan. Those without property or other security would get no money and therefore no relief. Those still possessing property or other valuable goods—and few are the starving tenant farmers in the South and Southwest who are so fortunate—would be privileged to borrow from the $20,000,000 fund, but their situation is doubly unfortunate if they are forced to borrow money to spend on food. In buying seed or equipment they would at least have the means of producing crops, from the proceeds of which the loan could be repaid, but in buying food they would simply be eating up this extra capital without at the same time augmenting their means of repaying the debt. It is clear that the compromise represents a victory for Mr. Hoover and a complete rout of the Senate. Moreover, it does not give the slightest consideration to the jobless in the cities, who outnumber the needy farmers and who are just as hungry and destitute as they are. A conscientious Senate would refuse to accept this deceptive and inadequate compromise.

THE WAR-TIME ESPIONAGE ACT still defaces the statute book. Senator Walsh of Montana, its author, introduced in the Senate a bill for its repeal and secured a favorable report from the Judiciary Committee, whereupon the Senate unanimously passed the repeal measure. The House referred the bill to its Judiciary Committee, and there is little hope of its being reported out unless public pressure is brought to bear. The Espionage Act, it will be recalled, instead of being repealed was simply suspended till the "next emergency," and the section giving the Post Office Department power to exclude from the mails any matter that it regards as seditious was left in effect. Under this section four radical papers have been barred from the mails in recent months. The Senate Judiciary Committee is "of the view that it is unwise to invest the Post Office authorities with the power to determine whether an article . . . in a newspaper does or does not offend against this statute," which "has been so administered as to make it to all intents and purposes a censorship law." The operation of the act during the war was worse than unsatisfactory; the continuance of its post-office provisions in peace time is an anachronism; and the Senate committee rightly thinks that we had better leave to Congress the enactment of proper legislation in the unhappy event of another war. Readers who want to help should write promptly to Representative George S. Graham, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

THE TARIFF COMMISSION, acting in response to Senate resolutions, has reported on seven commodities, and the President, acting on its recommendation, has raised the rate on woven-wire fencing, lowered the rates on wood flour, pigskin leather, straw hats, and maple sugar, and left unchanged the duties on ultramarine blue and wood floor coverings. Even after the reductions, wood flour alone pays less than it did previous to the rate increases of 1930. The commission attributes the speed of its action to its decision "to use foreign invoice prices as evidence of, or as a supplement to, foreign cost data, as provided in the statute." The whole theory that tariff rates can be exactly fixed on the basis of differences in cost of production is absurd. The commission reports, for example, that it costs twenty-two cents a pound to make maple sugar in the United States and fifteen and eight-tenths cents in Canada, which is plain nonsense. There are as many costs of producing maple sugar in the United States as there are farmers producing it. The only question is how much you think it worth while to hamper imports by a tax. Luckily, in four out of the seven cases above the commission decides

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on less obstruction rather than more. To indicate the measure of our enlightenment on the question of international trade, the Commerce Committee of the Senate has just decided by a vote of nine to six to report favorably a bill prohibiting the importation of crude oil in excess of 16,000,000 barrels annually during the coming three years. Apparently the pressure of the small operators, unable to maintain themselves, in the face of the depression, against their big competitors, has been too much for the Senate committee. It will take more than an embargo, however, to make all our oil operators prosperous.

AN INTERESTING LEGAL SITUATION has developed as a result of the Senate's action on the nominations of Messrs. Smith, Garsaud, and Draper as members of the Federal Power Commission. Despite President Hoover's refusal to return the papers of confirmation, the Senate proceeded to a reconsideration of the nominations and confirmed Messrs. Garsaud and Draper by narrow majorities, but rejected Chairman Smith by a vote of forty to thirty-three. Following this vote, the Senate passed a resolution directing the district attorney for the District of Columbia to institute quo warranto proceedings against Mr. Smith. We thus have the chairman of the commission holding office under what the President, acting upon the advice of the Attorney General, maintains is a perfectly legal appointment, while the Senate, acting through a subordinate official of the Department of Justice, seeks to have the appointment declared illegal. The case is believed to be entirely without precedent and it involves interesting questions of constitutional law. However it may be determined, almost irreparable damage has been done to the prestige of the new power commission.

THE PROPOSED MERGER of the Standard Oil Company of New York and the Vacuum Oil Company, former subsidiaries of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, which was attacked by the Department of Justice as a violation of the Standard Oil dissolution decree of 1909, was approved by the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals at St. Louis on February 7. It is announced that an appeal will be taken promptly to the Supreme Court. The judges hold that the proposed merger is "an entirely new undertaking" supported by "sound business reasons" which are "wholly unconnected with any desire to create a monopoly." The possible significance of the decision in respect to the marketing of petroleum products, notably gasoline, is indicated in a striking article that we publish elsewhere in this issue, describing the business rivalries that lie back of the proposed merger. If the decision is sustained by the Supreme Court, it is considered probable that further consolidations of former Standard Oil units may be brought about, and in view of changed business conditions and changing public opinion there is no telling just how far the courts may go in permitting such mergers.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS by Owen D. Young of a thoroughgoing revision of our national banking laws will deservedly carry weight with the Senate Banking and Currency Committee before which they were made. But though Mr. Owen Young has evidently thought much on the subject, he does not appear to have thought enough. In his formal statement he recommends, in one breath, that State as well as national banks be legally compelled to become members of the Federal Reserve System, and in the next breath he proposes that if unsound practices are persisted in by any member bank, the Federal Reserve Board may expel it from membership. Obviously Mr. Young has not made up his mind whether membership in the Federal Reserve System should be made a duty or a privilege. Nor does he indicate what is to happen to the expelled bank. Again, Mr. Young's whole statement implies that the main cure of our banking evils lies in Federal Reserve control; yet he admits that as one of the directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York he was delinquent in his own duty in failing to recommend the raising of the rediscount rate in 1928, and he points out that when the bank's directors did approve a rise of the rediscount rate beginning in February, 1929, the Federal Reserve Board week after week turned their recommendation down. It was precisely the Federal Reserve Board, in other words—whether through timidity, lack of intelligence, or purely political motives does not at present concern us—that was responsible for a fundamentally unsound banking practice in 1928 and 1929. What guaranty is there that if the board had more power it would follow sounder practices?

TRADE FIGURES FOR 1930 just made public by the Department of Commerce indicate plainly the business folly behind the wild attempts now being made at Washington to hamstring trade with Russia. Out of thirty-eight countries listed, Russia alone showed increases in our export and import figures last year. The press has been filled with tales of Russian dumping. In fact, we bought $21,520,000 worth of goods from the Soviet Union in 1929 and $21,963,000 worth in 1930—an increase of $443,000. On the other hand, our sales to the Russians came to $81,500,000 in 1929 and $111,300,000 in 1930, a year when our trade with every other country reported fell off disastrously, our total exports declining by a full one-fourth from $5,241,000,000 to $3,843,000,000, and our imports falling proportionately. We sold Russia in 1930 five dollars' worth of goods for every dollar's worth that Russia sold us. The Russians pay their bills and they increase their purchases at this time when all other countries have to cut theirs. With millions of men out of work because our factories cannot get orders and with one country in the world able and willing to give us more orders, our statesmen go out of their way to kick that one customer in the face because, forsooth, that customer is Communist.

THE WASHINGTON ADMINISTRATION has managed awkwardly to escape the embarrassment of having to try Major General Smedley D. Butler by court martial. We shall probably never know the truth of Butler's allegation that Mussolini had run down and killed a little girl with his automobile and then had unhesitatingly driven on with the remark: "What is one life in the affairs of the state?" But we do know that little or no good, at least as far as Washington's relations with Rome were concerned, could have come out of a military trial. A public hearing would have been unavoidable, and the consequent widespread and protracted public discussion of the case, together with the renewed editorial comment on it, could

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only have added to Washington's embarrassment. It is alleged that representations from the Italian Ambassador, who was not unaffected, doubtless, by the widespread protest the court martial evoked in Washington and elsewhere, caused the State Department to recommend that the trial be dropped. In any event, it is just as well that someone learned in time that the Administration had overreached itself in paying its compliments to the Dictator of Italy.

THE FRENCH LOANS to Poland, Rumania, and Jugoslavia, to an aggregate amount of 1,500,000,000 francs, together with French participation in a proposed German loan of $32,000,000, are indicative of a radical change in the loan policy of French banks. Since the World War France has been an inconsiderable factor in the foreign-loan market, partly, of course, because of the heavy financial cost of reconstruction, but also because French investors lacked confidence in foreign securities and French fiscal policy burdened the export of capital with taxes and other charges. Meantime gold by the billion has flowed into the Bank of France, and for the most part remained there. Now, thanks to recent legislation, foreign loans have been made easier, and a change of government policy has also changed public opinion. The latter influence is probably quite as important as the former, since government approval, not infrequently with more or less of urging, has usually been necessary to induce a Frenchman to part with his money. The loans of 500,000,000 francs each to Poland, Rumania, and Jugoslavia are to be made to three of France's political allies, and political as well as financial considerations doubtless lie back of them. The loan to Germany suggests that German credit is believed to be good and that serious political difficulties between the two countries are not expected. Whether the loans mean that France is to become a close competitor of Great Britain and the United States as a lending nation cannot yet, of course, be safely predicted, but French gold is at least being put at work.

ELECTIONS IN SPAIN, unknown for seven years past in that distracted country, are at last to be held, those for the Congress, or lower house, on March 1 and those for the Senate on March 15. The Cortes, or Parliament, is to meet on March 25. The royal decree calling the elections speaks briefly of the need of restoring parliamentary government after a long period of dictatorship, refers to "grave problems" facing the country that need legislative treatment, and points to the necessity of various constitutional changes. With the announcement of the elections goes also the restoration, formally at least, of freedom of speech, of the press, and of political and religious organization. On its face the decree makes good the assurance given by General Berenguer several months ago of an early return to parliamentary methods, and to that extent may be regarded as a victory for those who have long opposed the dictatorship. There is nothing to indicate, however, that the monarchical system is to be in any material respect altered, and the radical groups which have been demanding a republic may be expected to continue their agitation. Curiously, while the center and moderate left parties are reported ready to boycott the elections as a means of emphasizing their protest against the dictatorship, the Communists, who intended to abstain, have changed their minds and will name candidates for both the Congress and the Senate. The next few weeks promise to be a period of stirring political discussion.

FROM GERMANY one of the most discouraging pieces of news in recent years is the announcement that economic circumstances have compelled the famous liberal newspaper, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, to dispose of a large part of its stock to the German dye trust. Thus one of the few remaining independent journals of the country has fallen under the influence of the industrialists. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* successfully withstood Bismarck's bulldozing and his vicious libel suits; it retained its freedom despite the efforts of Kaiser Wilhelm II to force his naval, colonial, and Bagdad policies down its editorial throat; it stood fast against the war censorship; and even during the great uncertainties of the inflation period it defeated the efforts of Hugo Stinnes to undermine its authority and independence. Now at last, to quote the Berlin *Tagebuch*, it has fallen victim to the present "economic and political terror." What Bismarck, Wilhelm, Ludendorff, and Stinnes failed to accomplish, the present crisis has achieved. To the *Tagebuch* it seems impossible that a newspaper like the *Frankfurter Zeitung* could ever descend to the level of other German journals which now have become blatantly fascist organs, and it also admits that the dye trust is not quite of the "cannibalistic type of our heavy industrialists," but nevertheless it has already noticed in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* "a growing sympathy for those destructive political and economic ideas which would previously have been wholly out of place in its columns, and at the same time there has been a departure from those ideas which heretofore had been so warmly supported."

FROM WEEK TO WEEK this paper is on the alert for constructive suggestions with which to edify its readers. Our thought for the current week is that Captain Malcolm Campbell and his torpedo racing car ought to be abolished forthwith. The whole performance, by which the captain attained a speed of 245 miles an hour—for 14.5 seconds—is without justification in nature, science, enterprise, or art. The car itself looks like a mechanical sausage; it is geared so that it cannot travel at much less than fifty miles an hour, and when the brake is released it shoots forward, in low speed, threatening to dislocate the neck of the unwary occupant. Its radiator, so we are told, must be filled with ice; it requires a new set of tires after every trial. Captain Campbell drove it over a course twelve miles long—five and a half miles for a start, one mile for the furious, top-speed test, five and a half miles to slow down to a stop. If there were any course sufficiently long and straight for an actual hour's run, it is plain that any car ever constructed would be shaken to pieces in the struggle. What would happen to the driver we cannot even conjecture. Captain Campbell himself declares he is not in the least thrilled by the adventure, and is only desirous of traveling at a speed of 300 miles an hour—for 12 seconds—before his racing days are over. He is thus risking his neck for nothing, not even a personal thrill. And the silly spectators who "watch" the "race" are rewarded by a loud noise and a blur. Compared to this sort of automobile racing, Tom Thumb golf is an intellectual exercise.

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The Bonus Raid

ALL the testimony of bankers and industrial leaders before the House Ways and Means Committee, even when allowance is made for those who weakened their remarks by obvious overstatement, made clear that the payment of a cash bonus of $3,400,000,000 at this time could only bring about most damaging economic results for the whole country, with greater eventual injury than benefit to the great majority of the veterans themselves. Most of the bankers expressed grave doubt that a bond issue of the size originally contemplated could be sold at all. To sell such an issue in 1917 and 1918, under the enormous enthusiasm of war psychology, with the posters, four-minute speeches, "quotas," threats and social pressure, plus the suspension of municipal and other construction work at that time to prevent any competition for funds, proved extremely difficult. If such an issue failed now, it is hard to estimate how serious the effect would be. Even if it succeeded, it would not only depress the market value of all outstanding bonds, with all the possible dangerous effects on the solvency of many banks whose portfolios have already suffered heavily by shrinkage in values, but it would absorb the available investment funds of the country to such an extent that the very capital that is so greatly needed at this time for municipal, State, and industrial construction could not be raised. The inevitable effect would be not only to make present conditions worse, but to postpone the period when more jobs—the only permanent form of relief—would be available. The spending of these cash payments by the veterans would not be likely to hasten any real return to better conditions. Most of the money would probably find its way into the luxury trades, giving them a temporary fillip. As one witness remarked, the effect would be much like that of a hypodermic injection, with no more lasting results.

It is not, however, mainly because of its serious economic consequences that the proposed cash payment is vicious, but because it has no real moral justification. Its proponents put it forward at the present time under the pretense that it is a measure of unemployment or distress relief; as such it is a palpable fraud. Under its proposed terms young doctors, lawyers, stockbrokers, and bankers who served in the war would receive exactly as much as men out of work; men with dependents would receive no more than men without them. Further, as most of the veterans, at the time of the war, were between the ages of eighteen and thirty, the cash payment would only reach men now between certain age limits—say thirty to forty-five. Such men are likely to be at the peak of their earning power. The proposed bonus payment would not, of course, go to unemployed unmarried women at all.

The complete dishonesty of the proposed soldiers' bonus as a measure of unemployment relief was unintentionally made clear in the statement of Owen D. Young before the House Ways and Means Committee, though Mr. Young was in favor of granting at least part of this bonus. He remarked that there are perhaps 5,000,000 persons out of work and that there are nearly 50,000,000 persons still gainfully employed. If one accepts these figures, it means that only about 10 per cent of the veterans—assuming that they suffer in about the same proportion as the rest of the population—are actually out of work, while the remaining 90 per cent are employed. But this means that 90 per cent of the bonus would be paid to employed persons at the expense of those actually out of work. At least four-fifths, and probably an even higher proportion, of the unemployed do not happen to be veterans. Even when he added veterans on reduced incomes and those in the drought areas, Mr. Young came to the conclusion that not more than one-fourth, or at most one-third, of the total number of veterans need cash now to relieve actual distress. This means that anywhere from two-thirds to three-quarters of the cash distribution originally proposed would be worse than thrown away. To the extent that from one-tenth to at most one-third would be real unemployment relief, it would be relief of the most idiotic sort—for no government with any sense of responsibility would dream of relieving unemployment by handing out lump sums of $1,000 to $2,000. The present contemplated Treasury grab can only increase the regret of all sincere persons that we do not have in actual operation at present a complete and thoroughly business-like national unemployment-insurance plan, for if such a plan were in operation few Congressmen could have had the effrontery to put forward the present specious arguments for an immediate soldiers' bonus, and even the tireless lobby maintained by the American Legion might have been a bit shy and backward.

Mr. Young, as a compromise, suggested that the government might advance to veterans who are really "in need" a substantial percentage of the face value of their certificates over the present loan value. As a business man, Mr. Young must know that the administrative expense of determining who was actually in need and who was not would be an enormous one. Some modification of this plan is now being most seriously discussed in Congress. Its proposal has caused considerable relief; but the only thing to be said in its favor is that it is less evil than the plan originally proposed. It will call, it is announced, "only" for $500,000,000, though there is no real assurance that the amount would remain within this figure. That Mr. Hoover would have the courage firmly to veto such a modified measure is extremely doubtful.

When the United States entered the World War, the admirable war-risk insurance plan was drawn up, and there was gratification on all sides that by this means a repetition of the Grand Army pension-grabbing scandals after the Civil War and of the Spanish War pension scandals would be made impossible. When the men were discharged at the end of the war, they were paid about $270,000,000 in federal bonuses. The individual States paid several hundred millions more. When the present bonus certificates were voted for in 1924 by a vote of 355 to 54 in the House and passed over President Coolidge's veto, *The Nation* said editorially: "This raid upon the Treasury is but a precursor to many similar raids for fifty years to come." There is nothing in the present situation to modify that prediction.

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Mr. Stimson Explains

SECRETARY OF STATE STIMSON, in his speech before the Council on Foreign Relations on February 6, gave a lucid and plausible explanation of American recognition policy. In South America, he said, we do thus and so because that has been our historic policy. In Central America we do the thing somewhat differently because there we have certain treaty obligations. In Russia —but on this point Mr. Stimson was silent. After all, the reader must consider that Mr. Stimson was sufficiently burdened in trying to justify our having two policies for application to countries in this hemisphere without having to go into the other policies we apply to the rest of the world. He saved himself this additional embarrassment by confining his discussion to our relations with "the other American republics."

"The practice of this country," Mr. Stimson asserted, "has been substantially uniform" from 1792 to 1913, although "there were slight departures from this policy during the Civil War." This general policy, he continued, "was to base the act of recognition not upon the question of the constitutional legitimacy of the new government but upon its de facto capacity to fulfil its obligations as a member of the family of nations. This country recognized the right of other nations to regulate their own internal affairs of government and disclaimed any attempt to base its recognition upon the correctness of their constitutional action." The Secretary declared that this was the policy followed during the last few months in recognizing the "new governments in Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, and Panama." One might, of course, raise the question of whether it was a sincere desire to follow this historic formula that prompted the early recognition of at least some of these governments, or whether it was in fact the fear that if we waited until they had proved their stability Great Britain might win a marked advantage in a commercial way by extending the hand of friendship before we did.

In any event, this is the policy we are following for the moment with regard to South America. When we come to Central America our recognition policy wears a radically different face. There our attitude is determined "by preexisting treaty." In the Central American treaties of 1907 and 1923 the five republics agreed that a revolutionary government would have to be constitutionally reorganized "by the representatives of the people" before it could be recognized. The 1923 treaty provided further that recognition would not be extended if the new president "should have been a leader in the preceding revolution or related to such a leader by blood or marriage, or if he should have been a cabinet officer or held some high military command during the accomplishment of the revolution." Immediately afterward our own government announced that it would "in its future dealings with those republics follow out the same principle which they had thus established in their treaty." Hence, with regard to Central America, we are obligated to inquire into "the constitutional legitimacy" of any new government, which, of course, as Mr. Stimson pointed out, "is a departure from the regular international practice of our government." That it also gives the United States the power to dictate the personnel of any Central American government has been proved on more than one occasion, although Mr. Stimson did not mention this.

Perhaps it was just an accident that these five republics should have adopted a treaty which compelled the United States to abandon its historic policy in so far as they were concerned. Perhaps we made this change grudgingly and against our will. But the records show that it was President Roosevelt who called the 1907 conference, and that it was President Harding who arranged for the conference in 1923 (the arrangements actually being made at the direction of the White House aboard the U. S. SS. Tacoma lying in Amapala harbor in August, 1922). Both of these meetings were held in Washington. So it appears that we were not disinterested. What our interest was based on Mr. Stimson himself revealed in saying that Central America

> has been the one spot external to our shores which nature has decreed to be most vital to our national safety, not to mention our prosperity. It commands the line of our great trade route which joins our eastern and western coasts. Even before human hands had pierced the isthmus with a seagoing canal, that route was vital to our national interest. Since the Panama Canal has become an accomplished fact, it has been not only the vital artery of our coastwise commerce, but as well the link in our national defense which protects the defensive power of our fleet.

It is refreshing to know that our South American policy, at least for the moment, is based upon history; that our admittedly imperialistic Central American policy is based upon self-interest; but when will Mr. Stimson get around to explaining and justifying our Russian policy?

Diplomats and Peace

"THE common aim of diplomacy the world over at the present time," so the French Ambassador, Paul Claudel, assured a Franco-American audience in New York the other day, "is peace. War today ends in revolution, and while it is inevitable that the situations out of which war arises must always exist, the dangers of war are understood today by all the nations of the earth rather than just by small groups of diplomats and financiers. Peace is the common interest of all countries at this time." M. Claudel was undoubtedly quite correct, in a formal and literal sense, in what he said about the diplomats, but if he intended his hearers to draw the conclusion that the kind of peace the nations are interested in is hopeful and reassuring, his words must be taken with some important qualifications.

On February 4, for example, A. V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, informed the House of Commons that Great Britain might have to "reconsider" its program of naval construction in view of the naval building that was going on in France and Italy. The British Commonwealth, he stated, was building 46,145 tons of warships, 2,656 tons of that amount being for Canada. France had under construction 100,684 tons and Italy 100,777 tons. Mr. Alexander did not wish it to be inferred that Great Britain was falling behind in European waters, since the whole imperial situation had to be considered, but he left his hearers with the impression that the so-called "escalator" provision of

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the London naval treaty, under which any of the signatory Powers may increase its tonnage if other Powers increase theirs, might have to be brought into operation.

The House of Commons had no reason to be surprised at Mr. Alexander's statement. France and Italy, as everybody knows, declined to accept the limitations of the London treaty because of Italy's refusal to concede to France the right to have a navy any bigger than that of Italy. Months of negotiation, in the course of which both Great Britain and the United States are reported to have used their good offices, have failed to settle the controversy, and a building truce which was agreed upon expired on December 31. On February 6 the French Chamber of Deputies was informed that it would shortly be asked to authorize the immediate construction of 41,000 tons of warships as part of a four-year program intended to meet the ambitious proposals of Mussolini. Included in the French program is the first of a series of cruisers designed to surpass the German cruisers of the Ersatz Preussen type. As the United States insists that its own navy must be at least equal to any other, a resort to the escalator clause by Great Britain would at once open the way for the United States to add to its own tonnage, with the likelihood that Japan would soon follow suit.

On the military side, France is pushing to completion some 200 miles of modern fortifications on its eastern and northeastern frontier as a defense against another German invasion, and Belgium is planning to make its forty miles of German gateway secure against attack. France, Belgium, Italy, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Rumania, and Jugoslavia, the last three offensive and defensive allies of France, had between them on October 1, 1930, standing armies of 1,914,990 men, while their army reserves reached the enormous total of 17,767,261. France, which has been supposed to lead the world in military aviation, is much concerned lest it should still be in danger in the air, Great Britain and the United States are busily developing their air services, and in the United States elaborate plans have been completed or are being worked out for the mobilization of industry in the event of war.

In a world a considerable part of which has solemnly renounced war as an instrument of national policy, the diplomats may well feel that a heavy burden has been laid upon them in keeping a peace so sententiously espoused and so little, apparently, believed in. Nobody knows better than a diplomat the danger that lurks in such a dispute as has just flared up between Bulgaria and Greece on the heels of a Balkan conference that paraded the olive branch, or in the oppression of minorities in Poland and Jugoslavia, or in the continued agitation in Germany for a radical revision of the Young Plan, or in the political and financial plight of the Nationalist Government in China. In spite of treaties and conferences and solemn pronouncements, nations great and small appear to be still of the opinion that peace, unless supported by armed forces capable of waging war on a grand scale, is as yet hardly more than a dream, and that agreements to keep the peace are not to be understood as deterring any of the parties from being constantly in trim to fight. Perhaps the international conference that is to meet next year may pave the way to better things, but in the meantime the diplomats have quite enough anxiety to keep them on the alert.

Sport for Sport's Sake

THE recent announcement of President Gates of the University of Pennsylvania that henceforth at his institution football would be no more important than philosophy should be surprising only in that it discloses the prevalence of the opposite state of affairs. Athletics at Pennsylvania will in the future be under a department of physical instruction, headed by a dean, controlled by the university, and coached by men who have not only university rank but the salary that goes with that rank. At Pennsylvania, as at many another large institution of learning in this land of plenty, it has been customary frankly to exalt athletics far beyond the academic subjects which an untutored person might have thought were the university's main concern. President Gates declares that no longer will the noble athletes who win fame and gate receipts for the university by successful competition with other colleges be given the run of the campus, no longer will they, merely as athletes, be supplied with scholarships, special training tables, special trainers, trips South for their health, and supervision by a coach who draws a salary about twice as large as that of the oldest and most highly esteemed professor on the campus.

It has been suggested that the first real test of Pennsylvania's new athletic policy will come with the loss of the first big game. In the meantime it is pleasant to see a university with the courage to remove its intercollegiate athletics away from the field of big business. In the main it has been the alumni who have exerted pressure to make their particular college outshine all the others in the matter of impressive stadia, high-priced coaches, the largest gate receipts, and the most earnest shopping around in preparatory schools for likely team material. President Gates has a suggestion for these alumni that they may or may not receive with open arms:

> If colleges and universities are to continue to meet the demand for enlarged and more luxurious facilities for the staging of sports spectacles, involving large capital expenditures, it is only reasonable that those for whose benefit and entertainment the contests are presented should, through alumni and public gifts, provide the necessary funds. Certainly funds intended and required for the educational program should not be used for this extra-educational phase of college athletics.

All this, as we said before, is so self-evident, irrefutable, and plain common-sensible that we should hesitate to set it down were it not so unusual a departure in the conduct of American universities. But while suggestions for the control of big-business athletics are in order, we have one of our own. It is to abolish intercollegiate contests altogether. That would leave the whole business of great football contests, rowing races attended by thousands of spectators, and track meets for which months of rigorous training are essential in the hands of professional athletics, where it belongs. Professional baseball has stood on its own feet for years; professional football is kept off its feet by the great "amateur" college games. So far no college or university president has thought of this remedy, simple as it is, or if he has thought of it, he has neglected to make his thoughts public. We offer the suggestion free of charge.

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India and the Round Table Conference

By GEORGE SLOCOMBE

Paris, January 30

BY two criteria must the results of the Indian Round Table Conference be judged in their consequences for the immediate history of India. How far do they satisfy the demand for independence made by the All-India Congress, the largest body of public opinion in India, at Lahore on December 31, 1929? How far do they satisfy the somewhat different demands made by Mr. Gandhi?

Mr. Gandhi himself has left his own attitude in no doubt. Hardly had the door of Yerovda jail closed behind him after nine months' imprisonment, than Mr. Gandhi indicated that for him at least the struggle was not over. On the constitutional issue he might possibly be satisfied. He even hinted that the Congress leaders might be induced to cooperate in the labors of the Round Table Conference or of its committees when they are resumed this year in India, and might accept the offer contained in the Prime Minister's final speech at the conference as a basis of negotiation. But for the Mahatma the moral issue remains paramount and unchanged. Until the salt tax was repealed, the Congress ban on foreign cloth made legal, the prohibition of liquor placed on the statute book, he could not recognize the sincerity of the British offer of self-government.

In his insistence on these concessions—the three essential points to which, in an interview with the present writer last May, Mr. Gandhi reduced his original eleven demands—the Mahatma, it may be suspected, stands alone. The other Congress leaders—Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel—are mainly concerned with the constitutional issue. And whereas Mr. Gandhi is content to accept the relief of the starving millions of India from the burden of the salt tax, from the ruinous rivalry of cheap foreign cloth, and from the degradation of the liquor traffic as the substance of independence, his political colleagues will demand less impracticable but more stringent guaranties of the good faith of Great Britain.

The "substance of independence" in the eyes of the political realists of the Congress Party is something at once more drastic and less visionary. They demand, if not separation from Great Britain explicitly, at least the right to secede implicit in the constitutions of the self-governing dominions of the British Commonwealth. They demand full responsible self-government, with control of the army, finance, commerce, and external relations, and they even threaten—although this, one suspects, is merely the polemics of warfare—the repudiation of India's foreign debt.

What are the Indian Nationalists offered by the All-India constitution adumbrated in the agreements and the partial agreements of the Round Table Conference and confirmed in the Prime Minister's declaration of January 19? The substance of these agreements, representing at once the maximum concessions made by the three British political parties and the Indian delegations, may be indicated as follows:

1. An All-India Federation to include the provinces of British India (without Burma) and the native states.

2. Responsibility for the government of India to be placed upon legislatures, central and provincial, "with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee during a period of transition the observance of certain obligations, and also with such guaranties as are required by minorities to protect their political liberties and rights."

3. Responsibility at the center to be partial. Responsibility in the provinces to be complete.

4. In both central and provincial governments the executive power to be partly or wholly vested in a ministry responsible to the legislature and formed by an elected member of this body who in the opinion of the Governor General or the provincial governor is capable of securing the support of a majority in the legislature.

5. The Governor General having chosen as his ministers persons who possess the confidence of the legislature, it is suggested that these persons shall retain office only so long as they retain this confidence. This is what the federal structure subcommittee of the conference understands by responsibility of government to legislature in the sense in which this expression is used throughout the British Commonwealth. The ministers are to be collectively responsible to the legislature.

6. During the period of transition (duration unstated) the Governor General is to be responsible for defense and external relations, including relations with the Indian states outside the federal sphere. In certain situations, such as an outbreak of hostilities on the frontier, the Governor General is given liberty to act on his own responsibility and is empowered to secure funds for the discharge of his special duties. Financial supplies for the subjects so reserved to the Governor General will not be subject to control by the legislature, but will be contracted for a period of years as a permanent charge outside the ordinary budget. The Governor General is also given overriding powers in regard to budgetary proposals and borrowing in circumstances when the proposals threaten the credit of India in the money markets of the world. Any amendment to the currency or coinage acts will require the Governor General's previous sanction. The service of existing loans and the salaries and pensions of public servants already engaged, together with the sums required for defense and external relations, are to be secured as consolidated fund charges. With these limitations no differentiation is contemplated between the position of the finance minister and that of any other minister responsible to the legislature.

7. The Northwest Frontier province becomes an autonomous governor's province instead of, as now, a territory administered by the central government. Burma is separated from India. Sind is separated from the Bombay Presidency and becomes an autonomous province.

8. An Indian Sandhurst is to be created, and the Indianization of the army in India is to proceed as rapidly as possible provided the Committee of Imperial Defense is satisfied that military necessities will be provided for.

So much for the superstructure of the elaborate con-

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stitution envisaged for India. The ambitious proposals—at once cautious and far-reaching; audacious in principle but heavily safeguarded in practice—have already met with a destructive fire of criticism from many quarters of India.

The principal weakness of the edifice lies in its base. The crucial issue of Hindu-Moslem representation in the legislature and the provision of safeguards for the Moslems, Sikhs, depressed classes, and other minorities, which must be the very foundation of any workable constitution for India, has not been settled. Both Hindu and Moslem delegates left the Round Table Conference with their communal rivalries and jealousies slightly more exasperated than when they came. The fate of the constitution—quite apart from its reception at the hands of the Congress—may therefore be endangered by a failure or a prolonged delay in the settlement of this thorny problem.

The chief criticism which the constitution meets in India is that it does not represent dominion status, and not even dominion status with safeguards. The Indian liberals, and chief among them Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the wisest and most balanced and also the most unprejudiced politician in India, believe, however, that in practice the safeguards will be found considerably less onerous than they now appear, and that any consistent and arbitrary interference by the Governor General against the spirit of representative government will be exceedingly difficult.

The position of the princes in the federal system and the considerable representation they claim—at one time they actually demanded 50 per cent of the seats in both ministry and legislature—are also vigorously criticized. The *Servant of India,* the responsible organ of moderate Hindu opinion, has already voiced the apprehension that if the representatives of the Indian states are nominated by the princes themselves and not elected by the peoples of the states, the dominion status of India will be rendered illusory. Even if the princes are content with one-quarter of the seats of the federal legislature—this is the proportion which would accrue to them on a population basis, and which will probably be adopted in the end—a permanent bloc would be constituted in the legislature which, it is argued, would replace the present official bloc nominated by the Viceroy and would therefore create an irremovable core of reactionary interests.

It is feared, too, that the princes, some of whom now look to Great Britain to protect them in their autocracies, will inevitably be subservient to British interests when these are in conflict with those of India. And if, this journal argues, the princes are given equal representation in the federal executive, representative government will be utterly impossible.

The most bitter attack leveled against the proposals of the Round Table Conference comes from the depressed classes and the representatives of Indian labor. It has been proposed that the provincial legislatures should be elected by direct suffrage, and that the members of the federal legislature should be elected in part by the states and in part by the provincial legislatures. With regard to the actual extent of the suffrage, the franchise committee of the conference was unable to agree. It is noteworthy, however, that the majority of the committee rejected the arguments of the labor representatives, Mr. Joshi and Mr. Shiva Rao, and of Dr. Ambedkar, the delegate of the depressed classes, that the immediate introduction of adult suffrage was both practicable and desirable.

With the exception of these members the committee appears to favor an increase of the suffrage to 25 per cent of the total population and the lowering of the age limit for women from twenty-five to twenty-one years. This proposal is condemned as hopelessly inadequate by all spokesmen of the trade unions and the depressed classes, who express the fear that the political power in India for years to come will be in the hands of an oligarchy of wealthy industrialists and landed proprietors, or their representatives.

Nevertheless, if the new constitution fails of acceptance, its rejection will come not from its critics among the economic or religious minorities, but from the vast body of youth of all classes and communities and of both sexes now ranged under the white, red, and green banner of the Congress. At the time of writing, the reply of Mr. Gandhi and of his fellow Congress leaders has not yet been uttered, but I make bold to predict that the working committee of the Congress, which is now meeting in Allahabad, will reject the offered constitution. The politicians of the Congress will refuse it not merely because it does not grant Mr. Gandhi's "substance of independence," but also because it offers something less than the substance of dominion status. And Mr. Gandhi himself, the moralist and the prophet of renascent India, will reject the constitution because it is not accompanied by the moral and economic revolution which he regards as essential—the liberation of the peasants of India from the triple slavery of the salt tax, the liquor traffic, and foreign cloth.

Going Home

By MARK VAN DOREN

His thought of it was like a button pressed.
Far away the figures started going;
A silver watch ticked in a sleepy vest,
And on the porch an apron string was blowing.

His thought again was like a fly-wheel cranked,
And circular machinery set gliding.
The little town turned truly, as the banked
Brown houses followed in and out of hiding.

His travel, once he went, was like the troop
Of farmers in an autumn to the fair.
All year the field was flat, but now the coop
Of turkeys and the horses would be there;

People moving everywhere and nodding,
Little boys with birds and yellow whips;
A person at a counter would be wadding
Rifles, and the girls would hold their hips.

His coming near was like the soft arrival
Of gods around a thing that they have made;
And will again forget; but long survival
Saves it, once again the trance is laid.

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Ballyhoo and the Higher Learning

By BENJAMIN STOLBERG

I

THERE is always something wrong with the higher learning. There is bound to be, for the growth of organized knowledge is such a delicate business that it is peculiarly sensitive to all kinds of cultural infections. For one thing, there is the inner antipathy between administration and wisdom, between the clerk and the savant. Then, to repeat the invincible platitude, there is the chronic sabotage of learning, the moment it socially matters, by the intricately vested and reinvested forces of any society. The higher learning is in the eternal perplexity of being an ineffable value in search of endowment. And the powers that be, in return for their patronage, are forever exacting a pedigreed alibi for their continued intrenchment. At Chicago one can become a "doctor" in "social-service administration" and believe that Marx is the junior partner of Hart, Schaffner, and Marx. And at Moscow, I venture, one cannot become a doctor in mathematical physics unless one holds that the incorrigible error in the quantum theory is really a dirty bourgeois trick. While the true scholar refuses to dignify the publicity of falsehoods with the methods of science or to raise the apologetics of follies into a philosophy of values, there are always enough pundits and mountebanks who can be trained to doctor bunk into a semblance of reason and hokum into the likeness of truth. And the ironic part of it all is that academic fakes are so seldom manufactured by real fakers. The pseudo-scholar almost always lacks both the humor and courage to be consciously and profitably spurious. Poor fellow, he pays the price of the quack in vulgarity without his fun in adventure!

But though scholarship is faked the world over, each national culture stamps these imitations with its own peculiar marks. Fake learning in Germany is likely to be doltish, in France it is a bit knavish, in England it wears a high hat, and with us it tends to become silly, immaterial, clerical, and excited. The incredible vulgarization of our higher institutions of learning since the war is, of course, but a reflection of the growing tawdriness of our social conditions in general. But what is peculiar about it is the technique by which fake learning has so rapidly muscled its way into high learning.

Our characteristic national vice is the assumption that life and behavior are synonymous, that the meaning of life can be gauged most accurately in terms of active and optimistic extravagance. Hence we do not really believe in tragedy, in the intrinsic dilemmas of spiritual conflicts. We suppress them, under the impression that we are facing them by doing something about them. Now since, by and large, our institutions of learning can do very little of which the forces in control of our culture do not approve, the more active these institutions become and the bigger they grow, the deeper they intrench themselves in the predicament of much ado about nothing. The noble dilemma of the advancement of knowledge is that it grows on the infinitely difficult and creative adjustment between tradition and revolution. The aim of learning is to gather ever more facts of strategic significance to upset the laws and orders by which they are supposedly governed. In other words, the higher the learning the greater its discipline, yet it must have complete license. There is obviously no sense to "research" which is pointless, and "objectivity" without some hypothesis has no object. But since we are afraid of such intellectual license, we have developed an insect-like industry in meaningless "social research" and we make a virtue of our "objectivity" in gathering "data" sufficiently irrelevant and trivial to point no conclusions. And conclusions are invidiously called "propaganda." This collection of trivia soon becomes so unwieldy that it takes whole congeries of committees to handle it, and these committees manufacture more "data" in the very process of examination. Thus we resolve the ancient dilemma of scholarship, the conflict between the conservation of knowledge and the revolution of learning, by turning our universities into monkey houses for elaborate monkey-shines, except in those disciplines which in their nature are neutral to any society.

Neither Dr. Flexner's brilliant chapter on the American Universities * nor this essay is an attack on American learning. They are in defense of it. In those branches of learning in which theoretical abstruseness, an authentic technique, or the discipline of a historic subject matter cannot be faked, American learning is not merely distinguished but magnificent. It is still possible to receive a sound education at Harvard or Columbia College, to my mind sounder than at Oxford or Cambridge, where the acquisition of personal culture is constantly stultified by the code of a gentleman. In medicine America leads the world, and it is far safer to have an appendectomy at Kalamazoo than to catch a common cold anywhere in the British Empire. The only time we may pardonably permit ourselves the folly of vicarious pride is when we think of the work of American natural and, especially, physical scientists, though it is annoying to read Dr. Millikan's naive stuff on his "maker," which is piling up a good deal of trouble for the future of the work he loves so ably and so well.

But after one has said all this, one must add that the American university just now is probably in a more dangerous position than the advancement of learning has ever been before in the history of modern Western society. Paradoxically, its contemporary tragedy lies in the fact that it is no longer in a genuinely tragic predicament. The implications of tragedy are too exalted for the comic absurdities from which it suffers. And nothing is so fatal to the life of organized reason as its burlesque. Our higher learning is no longer engaged primarily in the historic struggle with scholastics, Pharisees, pundits, and pedants. It has to put up with an army of mountebanks and nitwits. The great rebels against the various forms of scholasticism, from Abelard to Daniel C. Gilman, fought them with the renaissance of learning. One can attack a professor grinding Greek gerunds with quotations from Plato's "Republic." But how in the world is

* "Universities—American, English, German." By Abraham Flexner. Oxford University Press. $3.50.

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one to overcome a glorified floorwalker who professes Personnel Administration or the "scientific" merchandising of brassières at a School of Business Administration? How is one to overcome a fancy room-clerk who is a *Privatdozent* in Hotel Management at Cornell? With flit or with listerine? The answer, alas, is probably that we need a new social metabolism altogether. But that is a long and difficult process. And in the meantime the American scholar is bewildered and helpless and lonely.

Where the true scholar treads cautiously to guard his intellectual integrity, his apes can rush in with noise and with fury. They have got themselves endowed in our higher institutions of learning into vast zoos for their own keeping, into schools of journalism and business administration, into graduate faculties of "scientific" philanthropy, into collegia of cookery and child guidance, into hundreds of fantastic "institutes" of one kind or another. And in the evenings they rig up their loud speakers in home-study courses and in the extension divisions. They cavort amidst crazy "experiments" in bizarre laboratories, they jabber a pseudo-technical lingo, and they confuse the public mind with statistical nonsense. All these stunts have the advantage of a "new" and "liberal" appearance. Our "enlightened" institutional big business has discovered, or, rather, unconsciously encouraged, this new technique of intricate flapdoodle to divert academic attention from significant issues.

II

Among the main parasites which have entered the host of American learning and have infected it with this strange dementia are the "foundations." These foundations are intellectual trusts of educational philanthropy with all the unconscious cleverness of an invincible social force. There is the Social Science Research Council, largely a Rockefeller-supported organization, nowhere officially connected with our universities, which is more and more controlling social research in our higher institutions of learning through the power of subsidy. There are other powerful foundations, such as the Rosenwald Fund, the Commonwealth Fund, the Russell Sage Foundation, and an increasing number of others. Their interlocking committees are odd assemblies of big business men, "scientific" social workers, professional visionaries, professorial clerks, and fat-boy bureaucrats. They see to it that the right people are selected for social studies. Their underlying theory is that if you can get all the "da-h-ta" on the Negro, race prejudice will vanish; that if you can get all the facts about industrial exploitation, you will resolve it into the sweetness of capital and the light of labor; or that if you develop "methods" of teaching a subject you will be saved the trouble of learning it. Frequently the foundations crash the gates of the universities by endowing "institutes," which are no longer societies of scholars freed from the burden of teaching for creative research, but are committees of academic foremen driving statistical wage slaves to "correlate" trivia into nonsense. Among the most recent discoveries of these big-business intellectual trusts is the value of cradle-snatching to fill in university presidencies. An *enfant terrible* like President Hutchins of Chicago, who loves to snap his intellectual milk teeth at the hands that feed him, is as harmless as he seems militantly "enlightened." President Hutchins is reorganizing the faculties of the arts and sciences into four divisions in order to remove the "barriers" of specialization. The new Dean of Social Science is Mr. Beardsley Ruml, formerly director of the Laura Spellman Foundation, a philanthropic agent without pretense to academic distinction. That the University of Chicago is more and more ridden by the foundations is obvious. Incidentally it may be said that President Butler of Columbia has so far refused to delegate his university to such foundation control.

Undoubtedly the best example of foundation intrenchment is the so-called Yale Institute of Human Relations, whose endowment Mr. Hutchins secured from the Harkness millions while he was dean of the Yale Law School. This macrocosm of all human knowledge is as yet in a nebulous stage, calling itself the Human Welfare Group. The object of the Human Welfare Group is to "break down all divisions" of science and learning in order to "integrate" everything from animal husbandry through child study and social hygiene to thermodynamics. The authentic correlation of knowledge is no doubt extremely desirable. But it must be the creative correlation by free scholars. The reckless telescoping of the various faculties under the lay pressure of scores of philanthropic committees is quite another matter. The Human Welfare Group proposes to "include the Yale School of Medicine, the Yale Law School, the Yale Divinity School, the Division of Industrial Engineering, portions of the University departments" dealing with everything under the sun. In the meantime if you happen to be rich don't forget that the Human Welfare Group needs a Women's Pavilion for $500,000, a Clinical Sociology Endowment for $1,000,000, and other such merry-go-rounds, as well as a number of endowed wheel-chairs for distinguished scholars by which they may propel themselves from one "pavilion" of learning to another.

Then there is the Vassar Institute of Euthenics, which is defined as "the science of efficient living." It is, as Dr. Flexner puts it, a salad made up of scraps "of mental hygiene, child guidance, nutrition, speech development and correction, family problems, wealth consumption, food preparation, household technology, and horticulture." By such "integration" lecturers in euthenics are enabled to teach virgins the science of matrimonial adjustment, while in the summer time alumnae-husbands can be taught "scientifically" how to stay put.

Teachers College at Columbia of course was not going to be left behind in this proliferation of institutes. Indeed, today it leads all other competitors. There is, says Dr. Flexner, "in Teachers College . . . an Institute of Educational Research, an Institute of School Experimentation, an International Institute, which is an administrative group, an Institute of Child Welfare Research, about which the less said the better," and many others. The Institute of Child Welfare Research has recently issued an "Inventory of the Habits of Children from Two to Five Years of Age" by the "Acting Director." During these three years children may have "a maximum of 2,325 habits, emotional, mental, motor, and social-moral. A child's score in each division is found through the formula $\frac{T}{S-3x} \times 100$". The Child Development Institute has made an extended "study" by tickling babies and then timing their laughter, finding thus the weighted average of infantile risibility as deduced from 2,325 laugh "exposures." A similar scientific contribution can be found in the New York *World* of January 20, 1931. It shows a

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picture of Dr. Arthur Frank Payne, a "scientician" in "educational psychology" at the City College of New York. He is holding an elaborate slide rule of his own concoction with which he is just about to "test scientifically" a young lady next to him, a Miss Helen Robinson of Columbus, Ohio, in order to determine whether she is really "America's sweetest girl" as decided by a recent national contest.

One of the favorite indoor sports of this type of higher learning is the making out of questionnaires. Questionnaires puzzled out in the schools of business administration are usually perfected models for yellow-dog contracts of employment. The psychological gentry, on the other hand, usually concoct a series of highly impertinent, far-fetched, extremely personal and imponderable questions, often with that pseudo-scientific salacity which requires anonymous answers. The questions, of course, are answered only by dolts, whose answers are patent absurdities, or by wits, who enjoy telling plain lies. Then all these answers are carefully correlated into a synthesis of errors and jargonized into technical chatter.

Among the hundreds of courses at the teachers' colleges at Chicago and Columbia, Dr. Flexner cites as fair examples courses on "manuscript writing," "teaching of educational sociology," "music for teachers of literature and history," "awareness of situations and planning of behavior," and innumerable courses in mental "measurements." Do you wish to know what "the relation of scholarship to a combination of all tests" is, as devised at the University of Chicago? Here goes:

$$R_{s.\,1\,2\,3\,4\,5\,6\,7\,8} = \sqrt{1-(1-R^2_{S\,1})\,(1-R^2_{S\,2.1})\,(1-R^2_{S.4.123})\,(1-R_{S.\,6.12345})\,(1-R^2_{S\,7.123456})\,(1-R^2_{S\,8.1234567})}$$

The teachers' colleges are not the only ones which offer burlesque courses. If you are too poor to see Joe Cook or Ed Wynn, just write for the catalogues of the Chicago Graduate School of Social Service Administration, the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, the Columbia School of Journalism (where they teach how to sell sonnets by correspondence), and especially the mail-order catalogues and full-page newspaper advertisements of the various extension departments and home-study divisions.

Here are some Ph.D. theses at Chicago, Columbia, and Harvard: "Pupils' Participation in High-School Control," "The Technique of Estimating School-Equipment Costs," "A Scale for Measuring Antero-posterior Posture of Ninth-Grade Boys," "An Analysis of Janitor Service in Elementary Schools," "Vocational Activities and Social Understanding in the Curriculum for Stenographer-Clerks," "The Technique of Activity and Trait Analysis Applied to Y. M. C. A. Executive Secretaries as a Basis for Curricular Materials," and finally "The Intelligence of Orphan Children in Texas." "Why orphans? Why Texas?" Dr. Flexner wonders.

III

Dr. Flexner points out all these absurdities with irony, brilliance, wisdom, and with that genuine objectivity which is highly significant. And he also gives some excellent advice for the cure of these phantasmagoria. He shows just wherein the American high school fails to prepare for higher education. He points out that our universities suffer from trying to digest both the English undergraduate college and the German graduate system. Of course, he would abolish from the universities all pseudo-trade, semi-vocational, and *ad hoc* schools. Whatever legitimate higher courses are given by authentic scholars in these "professional" schools, he would redistribute into the established departments of the university, whence they have been abducted. It is a pity, by the way, that Dr. Flexner does not go into the so-called "experimental college," the variety of companionate learning of teacher and student of which Dr. Meiklejohn is the most articulate exponent. This "new" theory of collegiate learning is based on a sort of diaphanous self-expression on the part of the student, who is encouraged to believe that there is no relation between one's right to opinion and one's investment in knowledge. The most fantastic expression of this sort of education we can find at Rollins College, where President Hamilton Holt has hired a "professor of books" and a "professor of evil," and where the acquisition of knowledge is a wild whirl of seminar dances.

But for all his suggestiveness, Dr. Flexner seems to me far more descriptive than analytical. He quotes with approval Lord Haldane's remark, "it is in universities . . . that the soul of a people mirrors itself," yet he fails to probe the social basis of our distortion of the higher learning. He fails to relate the degradation of learning with our general cultural conditions, which are but the miasma of deep social injustices under the control of an impersonal, institutionalized, monopolistic plutocracy, cheap, vulgar, and empty. In due process of history, this vulgarity will probably come to an end. For the present the light of American learning will be kept burning by those genuine scholars who are too shrewd, too wise, and too honorable to be spiritually corrupted. Such efforts as Dr. Flexner's own new Institute for Advanced Study, which intends to do for our day what Gilman did with the original Johns Hopkins, will help a great deal. Yet there is something more we can do. We must never tire of exposing the fake advancement of learning. And above all we must appreciate that each kind of freedom has its own carriers. The relevant freeman in the university is not to be found among a "liberal" board of trustees nor even among the students. He is the scholar and teacher. When he is free, his students will also be free to learn what he knows and to think what they want. The radical critic of our university is too much concerned with the freedom of the student and far too little with the freedom of the savant. It is not the freedom of immature knowledge but the protection of genuine learning that we want. For a true advancement of learning is bound to point the arrow of American history.

Tragic Conclusions

By VIRGINIA MOORE

Tragic conclusions we cannot escape.
In thought and action let us be mature,
Compact and weaponed like the hornet's shape
That teaches caution as the only cure.
But let us be two children in our love,
Taking time's sweetness from each other's hands:
Suspicion is the badge of base-born minds
And calculation never understands.

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Your Gasoline Tank

By LAWRENCE M. HUGHES

IN an address before the American Federation of Labor at Boston in October President Hoover suggested that the time has come to "reconsider" the anti-trust laws in the light of modern conditions. Speaking before the American Petroleum Institute at Chicago in November, Colonel William A. Donovan, former assistant attorney general, pointed out that "we may have reached a point where attempts will be made to modify the economic policy of the Sherman law and to substitute some form of government control." Colonel Donovan believed that in view of present chaotic conditions in the oil industry and the large supply of crude oil above ground, concerted efforts by producers to limit production and stabilize prices on a reasonable level of profit would not be in violation of the law.

Standard Oil became the "mother of trusts" primarily by its ability to control refining and transportation. The most significant trend in the industry today is toward control of markets. The dissolution of the old Standard Oil Company of New Jersey in 1911 introduced a period of vigorous competition in the industry. Independent concerns were able to combat the segregated members of the "Standard Oil group" on more nearly even terms. Coinciding as it did with the rapid extension in the use of the automobile, this new competition assumed the form largely of a fight for filling stations. A dozen large factions have grown tremendously in scope and power. Today most of the stations not already owned or controlled by one or another of these factions have been forced to become exclusive agents.

Thus the chain-store system has been extended in the oil industry on a wider scale than in any other. Not only are filling stations centrally controlled, but the products which they sell are controlled by the company from the time the oil issues from the earth until it is poured, as gasoline or lubricating oil, into your car. This might be described as the "internal" basis of monopoly. The "external" basis is the ability of a company to acquire or defeat competitors and to outwit the government and the public.

The dissolution created a number of intentionally unrelated regional Standard companies. Several of these have been forced to fight single-handed against stronger and semi-national companies whose growth has not been hampered by the anti-trust laws. Although certain members of the group sell in almost every country in the world, none, except Vacuum, a comparatively small member, sells throughout the United States. Vacuum, devoted primarily to lubricants, was immune from the regional restrictions. Mergers with independent companies have broadened the scope of some of them. Standard of New York has acquired General Petroleum and is selling along the length of the Pacific Coast, as well as in New York and New England. Subsidiaries of Standard of Indiana have enabled it to expand west to the Rockies and east to New England. Standard of New Jersey sells in Texas and Louisiana, as well as the East. But on the national marketing map there are still large gaps which none of these Standard Oil members alone has been able to fill.

Two independents, on the other hand, have already achieved fairly national distribution. The Texas Company and Shell Union (controlled by Royal Dutch-Shell) now have stations, owned or affiliated, in every State, and almost in every city of any size, in the country. The number of their filling stations is larger than that of any member of Standard Oil. Gulf, Cities Service, Sinclair, Tidewater Associated, Pure Oil, Continental, and Richfield—each has wide marketing territories. The freedom granted Shell here, coupled with the resources of its sponsors and the fact that it can undersell in many localities through the use of cheap Venezuelan oil, is particularly a thorn in the side of Standard Oil because Standard has such a large share of its business in British markets that it cannot raise a patriotic appeal here.

Royal Dutch-Shell today is the largest unit in the oil industry. With subsidiaries, it is perhaps two-thirds as large as all the members of the Standard Oil group combined. Gasoline, owing to the increased use of automobiles, now accounts for two-thirds of the industry's business, and more than three-fourths of the world's automobiles are in the United States. Regardless of success abroad, if Standard cannot defeat Shell here, it must fail. In order to defeat it Standard must have a unified chain of outlets.

And Standard is not beaten. Men responsible for the success of the original New Jersey company—notably John D. Rockefeller—are still large holders in the leading members of the group. Their methods still prevail. And these members—especially New Jersey, New York, Indiana, California, and Vacuum—still rank as large as or larger than their leading independent competitors. New Jersey's assets, for example, are two and one-half times as large as those of any other American oil company, twice as great as those of the older New Jersey company at the time of its dissolution. New York and Indiana each is larger than Texaco, Gulf, Shell Union, or the oil interests of Cities Service, and California compares favorably with them. Even Harry Sinclair's proposed $1,200,000,000 combination would fall half a billion dollars short of Standard of New Jersey. Because of their size and their close relationships, any large member of the Standard Oil group, conditions being opportune, might form a sound nucleus for monopoly.

Standard, frankly, would like to bring back the trust. But it wants no more $29,000,000 fines. By an expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars for philanthropy and promotion, over a period of nineteen years, the group has brought itself back into the good graces of the government and the public. It wants to hold this esteem. Its efforts, therefore, to set aside the dissolution decree have been circumspect and entirely legitimate. A year or so ago New Jersey was permitted by the government to reacquire Anglo-American Petroleum as a subsidiary in the British Isles. A more important step in this direction was the announcement, last February, of plans for a merger of Socony and Vacuum as the General Petroleum Corporation. This proposal is now being fought by the Department of Justice. Decision on it will be made by the federal court at St. Louis,

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where the dissolution decree was rendered. Socony-Vacuum would not form a dominant company. It would market only about 9 per cent of the petroleum products sold in this country and would be in assets only about half as large as Standard of New Jersey. Favorable decision on the proposal, however, would set a significant precedent, and might set the wheels in motion for more important mergers among members of the family of Standard Oil. New Jersey, Indiana, and California might form a company with assets of nearly three and one-half billion dollars—virtually as large as all the Royal Dutch-Shell enterprises throughout the world. If all the members of Standard Oil were to recombine they would control half the assets of the world's twelve-billion-dollar oil industry.

Decision on the Socony-Vacuum plan, however, may take months, even years, and competition will not permit Standard Oil to be patient about it. Standard Oil is not lacking today in any of the qualities which could make it dominant, and it feels it must reach out for control in other directions. With the secrecy and almost with the speed with which the elder Rockefeller gained control of the oil-refining business of the country more than a half-century ago, the group is now setting out to control markets.

Vacuum has the most ambitious program. It is seeking to build up a chain of 122,000 filling stations by 1935, and it is now about a fifth of the way toward that goal. It is hardly too much to say that in this program Vacuum, smallest of the five Standard leaders, has been chosen for the role of marketing agent for the entire group.

But owing to the rush to build and acquire filling stations there are now three or four times as many as can profitably be operated. There are in fact some 315,000 stations. In more vivid terms, there are nearly as many filling stations as grocery stores and six times as many as there are drug-stores; there is one station for every eighty cars.

In its expansion program Vacuum, wisely, does not seek to add to this number. It is acquiring *existing* stations, not by outright purchase, but by obtaining, usually, 51 per cent control. This accomplishes the double advantage of control at about half cost (even so the program will involve an aggregate expenditure in excess of one billion dollars) and of keeping the operation in the hands of experienced local men. Vacuum, in fact, goes a step farther—it generally retains the name of the local company or operator. Thus, playing a silent part, it profits not only from the established identity and good-will of these stations in their local markets, but from efficiency and economy brought about by great resources and standardized methods. Moreover, in order to present itself as a local independent in all public contacts, each station usually carries several brands of gasoline. Under this guise, Vacuum may obtain a measure of control over the sale of competitors' products. And Vacuum, be it noted, is no longer merely a refiner and marketer of lubricants. It has introduced its own brand of gasoline, which will soon be sold nationally.

Despite its relatively small size, Vacuum is better qualified than any other member of Standard Oil to carry out such a project. For many years it has sold its lubricants not only in every State but in every city, town, and hamlet in the country. It has in the United States today some 75,000 outlets—"general stores," garages, and other places, as well as filling stations of its own and of other companies. The company boasts that every village large enough to support a post office has a Vacuum Oil dealer. Such is the framework on which the company can build.

If there were no other reason to suppose that in this project the company is acting largely for the other members of Standard Oil, there is the fact that, alone, Vacuum could not raise a billion dollars with which to finance it. Its entire assets are only a fifth of that amount, its entire annual sales not more than a third of it. Even New Jersey, eight and one-half times as large, could not hope to achieve this goal alone in six years. In its execution the plan shows evidence of coordinated effort on the part of all the major members of Standard Oil; in its inception it suggests the methods and personality of John D. Rockefeller.

The plan was formally launched early in 1929. Today some 25,000 of the stations already have been taken over. The number is steadily increasing. Because the operation of filling stations is not profitable and gasoline sales today, for the first time in many years, are not increasing, it is doubtful whether there will be more than 315,000 stations in the country by the end of 1935. When Vacuum has 122,000 it will have more than a third of the number. Actually its position will be much stronger. The stations being acquired represent in many respects the cream of the independents in the country. By 1935 Vacuum will probably be doing at least half of the gasoline business.

More important still, it can then be effective in coordinating and unifying all the scattered forces of Standard Oil, making it unnecessary for that company to seek repeal or modification of the anti-trust law or to attempt mergers in the face of them. A firm basis of monopoly will have been reestablished. That goal has not yet been reached. It will not be reached uncontested by Shell and other independents. Several of them are still strong enough to put serious obstacles in Standard Oil's path. Shell Union, for instance, has expanded rapidly in the past few years. Today, throughout the nation, it owns or controls some 35,000 stations.

Texaco reached nation-wide proportions even earlier. If it has not been expanding so rapidly as some of the others of late, it is still a factor in the fight. The other leaders are not idle. This year the aggressiveness of Cities Service and Sinclair has been especially notable. The presence of the Mellons in Gulf, of the Daweses in Pure Oil, of J. P. Morgan and Company in Continental lends power and intensity to the struggle.

Of all the independents, however, Shell Union is the most to be reckoned with. Behind it are all the world-wide assets of Royal Dutch-Shell and forty years of growth and prosperity such as no oil group except Standard at the height of the trust has ever experienced. Behind it also is the sponsorship of the British government. For expansion in the United States Shell Union is now spending from $150,000,000 to $200,000,000 a year—pocketing temporary loss to intrench itself for ultimate gain. At its present rate of growth, it may have 75,000 stations by the end of 1935.

If both Vacuum and Shell Union were to achieve their objectives, the American gasoline market would then be divided between them. With the resources at their command it is not inconceivable that they could wipe out or absorb even the largest of the other factions.

Between Standard and Shell there might then ensue a battle to the death—a battle of price-cutting, "diversifica-

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tion," and "super-servicing" far more exaggerated than that in which they have long been engaged; and a battle from which the consumer would derive much temporary profit. Deterding admits that his interests are "always ready for a good fight." Standard has fought, too, on occasion; but with large competitors it would rather make agreements (in which the competitors, incidentally, have not usually had the upper hand). It goes without saying that neither Standard nor Shell can afford to "fight away" its profits.

There have in fact been recent evidences of willingness on the part of both, but particularly Shell, to cooperate. Standard of New Jersey and I. G. Farbenindustrie Aktiengesellschaft, the German chemical trust, control the hydrogenation process for extracting gasoline from coal, oil shale, and other minerals—a process which not only is said to return 105 barrels of refined from every 100 of crude, but which extends almost infinitely the oil resources of the nation. New Jersey has formed a company to license the process in this country. With other independents, Shell Union has taken stock in it. The control, however, remains in the hands of Standard Oil. Shell Union has been forced to participate because it dares not be left behind. It is not improbable that New Jersey may make as much from the licensing, over a long period of years, as it has ever made from the sale of oil.

With the other independents out of the way and Shell alone in Standard's path toward monopoly, it is logical that such agreements would be made. Controlling future refining through hydrogenation, and controlling a majority of the markets of the country, Standard could probably persuade Shell to the wisdom of such cooperation. The mere fact that they have long been enemies would not alter the supposition. In modern business, profits come first. Dividends must be paid. In order to continue them companies must be able and willing to adjust themselves to new situations as they arise. No one understands this better than those who guide the destinies of Standard Oil and Shell. There would be no necessity for merger or even for open agreements between them then. After all, such things are better done on the quiet. But *if* the Vacuum project goes through, *if* New Jersey can retain control of refining, Standard's control of the industry would follow. Monopoly would have closed its grip on the oil industry and on the public who must buy its products.

Now monopoly as such is not to be condemned. If such monopoly were established under close government supervision, then the development of closer relationship between production and consumption, the greater efficiency through elimination of waste in product and of duplication of facilities, the nation-wide uniformity of product and service would on the face of the matter be worth while to the public. The American Telephone and Telegraph Company as a virtual monopoly is doing a better job than its constituent companies could do separately. If the oil monopoly were built up openly, under close governmental and public supervision, it might even be a step toward government ownership and operation of this basic industry. If, however, the new Standard Oil trust were built up secretly, so that its existence or the extent of its control was unknown, it is probable that the increased efficiency would react only in favor of an "inside" few. Even the rank and file of the stockholders, collecting reasonable dividends regularly, need not be apprised of it. The effects of the monopoly would extend farther than the sale of oil products. Because of the immense profits and power which a few would enjoy, it might in time extend into every important phase of American life.

Standard is already powerful. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and the group which shares with him the control of the leading Standard Oil companies are today probably the most influential "rulers" in America. Rockefeller personally holds 25 per cent of New Jersey and a similar proportion in the four other leaders. These men are more than "oil magnates." Not only are their products bought by every industry, every utility, and every home; not only are they among the largest customers of other industries, but of several they are among the largest owners. The Rockefeller money has gone into steel, into railroads, into banks, and a variety of other enterprises. The investments of Harkness, Archbold, Flagler, Bedford, and others of the Standard Oil crowd are almost equally widespread.

Their influence, moreover, is not only economic but social. Rockefeller alone has given more than three-quarters of a billion dollars to education, religion, science, and hundreds of specific "social services." Harkness has given many millions to Yale, Harvard, Columbia, and other institutions. It is true that these donations have been made to a large extent without "strings." It is also true that they have done much good. But the mere fact that a great university or a great church is brought into being or supported so fully by the patronage of one man must affect the teachings of that institution.

Thus the fight for monopoly of oil markets becomes a vital public issue. Thus Standard Oil, unchecked, may mold American and world opinion, and curb still further the freedom of human life.

In the Driftway

THE Drifter had not meant to revert so soon to idleness. It is an ideal, however, to which he is so firmly devoted that he is willing to avoid any amount of work in its behalf. He is glad, therefore, to give space to a correspondent whose letterhead bears the tantalizing address, "laughing horse, taos, new mexico."

DEAR MR. DRIFTER:

Your column of January 28 interested me even more than your column generally does, for I am particularly interested in idleness—probably because of my own struggle against an inherited New England conscience which keeps me too often "worried" over my also inherited Southern torpor! And I prefer the latter.

But I'm not writing this to tell you that. I thought you might be interested to know that, stimulated by your article, I am actually planning to make and hang a sign at the gate of my hermitage—a mud house in the curve of the Rio del Pueblo, near Taos, New Mexico—announcing it as an "Idleness Institute: Classes and Private Lessons in How to Be Idle and How to Use Idleness." Or perhaps simply: "College of Idleness. Apply Within." ("Apply within" might not be a bad slogan for the school, matching Mr. Socrates's "Know thyself.")

I shall make you an honorary professor, and am hoping that you will accept the post and take it as one of your duties to devote your column more frequently to further

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development of your ideas on the subject. Such essays will, like your first one, be used as a part of the preliminary reading course for beginners. And I hope that the next time you will mention further references. Stevenson, of course, has spoken on the subject; also Montaigne, surely; and I remember much valuable comment in Thoreau. But I may have difficulty in compiling a bibliography owing to the unfortunate limitations of my own library and the practical non-existence of good public libraries in this part of the country.

In other words, I realize the difficulties of planning such a college—or, rather, of actually carrying out such a plan. But I shall send you my prospectus when I have finished it and shall list you as a Drifting Honorary Professor, even though I never learn your name.

* * * * *

HERE, in the Drifter's opinion, is an excellent proposal, laughing horse or no laughing horse. New Mexico, where there is a great deal of sun and practically no machine age, is of course just the place for an Institute of Idleness. And the Drifter will cooperate in the enterprise in every way compatible and to a degree commensurate with his devotion to idleness. Some time he will even go so far as to make a list of the most effective commentators on idleness—a list which will assuredly be headed by Stevenson, who, as the Drifter now remembers, gave him his first intimation—fortunately early enough in life to be of use to him—that idleness was not another term for immorality. As for the kind and unprecedented offer to make him an honorary professor, the Drifter, sight unseen, can think of no academic berth he would find more comfortable than a Chair of Idleness in Taos.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Red Cross Finances

[The Nation *in its issue of January* 21 *referred to a statement by the People's Legislative Service that at the beginning of the current fiscal year, July* 1 *last, the Red Cross had on hand or "substantially assured"* $44,000,000, *of which amount* $38,000,000 *was immediately available. The authenticity of these figures was later questioned by Judge John Barton Payne and by other persons. An inquiry addressed by* The Nation *to the People's Legislative Service brought this reply.*]

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Replying to your query as to how the figures used in our news release of January 12 on the Red Cross can be "reconciled with the figures given by the Red Cross itself," the answer is: The figures used in the financial statements made by Chairman John Barton Payne before the appropriations committees of the Senate and the House cannot be reconciled with our figures.

The reason is: Our figures (based solely on authenticated Red Cross data furnished directly to us) are absolutely accurate. Judge Payne's figures are grossly inaccurate.

The crux of our statement was: "The Red Cross entered the current fiscal year (July 1) with $44,000,000 in hand or substantially assured." The retort by telephone from the Red Cross was: "You have overstated the amount by about $20,000,000." Within the hour Mr. James K. McClintock, vice-chairman in charge of finance, and Mr. J. D. Cremer, Jr., assistant director of disaster relief, arrived at our office to show us the error of our way. What was the result?

There is before me as I write a statement in the handwriting of Mr. McClintock, checked and double-checked by him, confirming our use of the figure of $44,000,000. I affirm this as though on oath. The statement was made out at my desk, in the presence of Mr. Cremer and myself—and not under duress! Confronted with the figures on pages 177 and 181 of the annual report of the Red Cross for the year ending June 30, 1930, there was no other honest thing for Mr. McClintock to do but admit that we were right. Quite spontaneously Mr. McClintock met the situation in honest fashion. It is just too bad for the reputation of the Red Cross that Judge Payne refuses to face the facts.

The $44,000,000 is arrived at in the following manner: Balance on hand July 1, 1930 (national organization and chapters—p. 177), $24,100,000. Add $8,800,000 for revenue for the current year "substantially assured." (That is the reported revenue for last year—p. 177. The average for the past ten years has been more than $14,000,000, but we use the minimum figure. It is composed largely of roll-call subscriptions—now actually in hand—and interest—as good as in hand.) This gives us $32,900,000. Now add $6,232,393.37, "endowment fund," and $5,000,000, "special reserve" (p. 181), and we have $44,132,393.37, or $44,000,000 in round numbers.

Deduct the endowment fund (even Judge Payne now admits the so-called "special reserve" is answerable to a great emergency) and the balance "available for expenditure" is, in round numbers, $38,000,000, as we stated in our release.

How much of this $38,000,000 is available for expenditure for disaster relief? About $20,000,000 in addition to the $5,000,000 the Red Cross has so far agreed to spend out of its hoarded funds, and entirely exclusive of the $10,000,000 it is now seeking to collect for drought relief. An expenditure of $25,000,000 could be made by the Red Cross to meet the present emergency without touching its endowment fund or interfering with its ordinary, more or less legitimate budget.

Judge Payne, in his frantic efforts to conceal the golden nuggets of the Red Cross hoard, reminds me of a solemn penguin on a nest. Somehow, either because of the clumsiness of the bird, or the cantankerousness of the eggs, the latter keep rolling out from under.

Washington, February 4 MERCER G. JOHNSTON

The Cycling Internationale

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The article on cycling in *The Nation* of February 4 warms my heart, although I am unable to accept the past tense in which it is written as I am still an active bicyclist. Born too late to have experienced the joys of the pioneering days, I nevertheless have been imbued with its traditions and hope to continue to cycle until some juggernaut of the road finally smashes me into limbo. Mr. Kirby mentions century runs. I included thirty of these in my riding last year.

There are many and various difficulties confronting the cyclist of today in this country—the contumely and contempt of the general public in this standardized land, the ever-increasing traffic, and the impossibility of obtaining first-class bicycles and accessories, which must be imported.

But even though the Newburgh club has disbanded, there are still many active clubs, and if our numbers here may not be great we are satisfied to know we are outposts of a great cycling Internationale, numbering its devotees by the millions, throughout the more leisurely countries of the world.

Philadelphia, February 6 ARTHUR C. VICKERY

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Midwinter Book Section

Four Preludes

By CONRAD AIKEN

I

Come let us take another's words and change the meaning,
Come let us take another's meaning, change the words,
Rebuild the house that Adam built, with opals,
Redecorate Eve's bedroom. We were born
With words, but they were not our words, but others',
Smacked of the kitchen, or of gods, or devils,
Worn and stained with the blood of centuries,
The sweat of peasants, the mean gold of kings.
Shall we be slaves to such inheritance?
No; let us sweep these skeleton leaves away,
Blow them beyond the moon; and from our anger,
Our pride, our bitterness, our sweetness too,
And what our kidneys say, and what our hearts,
Speak with such voice as never Babel heard;
And bring the curtain down on desolation.

Was this rich tongue of ours shaped by our mothers?
Has it no virtue of its own? says nothing
Not said before at church or between sheets?
Must Shakespeare, with his phrase for the stormed heaven,
Hot midnight veined with lightning, babble only
Such mother's milk as one time wet his cheek?
Then let's be dumb: walk in the little garden:
Watch the wise thrush delight as once in Egypt;
And hear the echoes of Thermopylae.

And this is peace; to know our knowledge known,
To know ourselves but as old stones that sleep
In God's midstream of wreckage, worn as smooth.
All's commonplace: the jewel with the rest.
. . . The demon truth, sharp as a maggot, works
His destined passage through the Absolute.

II

When you come back from Memnon, when you come
Into the shadow, the green land of evening,
And hear the leaves above you, and the water
Falling, falling, in fountains;
When you remember Memnon, and the sand,
The stone lips crying to the desert, the stone eyes
Red with the daybreak not yet seen by you;

When you shake out the desert from your shoes
And laugh amongst you, and are refreshed,
And go about your business, now secure
Against the mockery of the all-changing moon;
And most of all, O sly ones, when you sell
So dearly to the poor your grains of wisdom,
Or barter to the ignorant your belief;

Oh think of this belief and think it evil,
Evil for you because you heard it only
From a stone god whose prophecies you mocked;
Evil for them because their hunger buys it;
Evil for both of you, poor pitiful slaves,
Who had no heart, when chaos came again,
Who had no love, to make the chaos bright . . .

Go back again, and find the divine dark;
Seal up your eyes once more and be as tombs;
So that yourselves may be as Memnon was.
Then, if you have the strength to face the darkness,
And praise a world of light, remember Memnon—
Stone feet in sand, stone eyes, stone heart, stone lips,
Who sang the day before the daybreak came.

III

Or daylong watched, in the kaleidoscope,
While the rain beat the window, and the smoke
Blew down along the roof, how the clear fragments
Clicked subtly inward to new patterns, seeming
To melt from rose to crystal, moon to star,
Snowflake to asphodel, the bright white shrinking
To let the ruby vein its way like blood,
The violet opening like an eye, the pearl
Gone like a raindrop. Never twice the same,
Never remembered. The carpet there, the table
On which the dog's-eared Euclid with fixed stars,
The cardboard battleship, the tops, the jackstones,
And the long window lustred with changing rain,
And the long day, profound and termless.

Or

The ship's deck, midnight, winter, and the stars
Swung in a long curve starboard above the mast,
And bow-ward then as the sea hoists the bow,
And back to port, in a vast dance of atoms,
Poured down like snow about you, or again
Steady above the mast-light, the wide span
Of brilliant worlds, not meaningless, watched bravely
By him who guards the lighted binnacle, and him
Dark in the swaying crow's nest, who beats his arms
Against the cold. What mind of stars is this?
What changing thought that takes its ever-changing
Pattern in burning worlds, worlds dying, named
Sirius or Vega or the Pleiades?
What voyage this beneath them, termless, but
Not aimless wholly, trackless in the trackless
Changing of thought in that wide mind of stars?

Back from that bitter voyage to this moment:
Where the clock's tick marks hunger from disgust,
And the hour strikes for laughter, causeless, caused
By one strayed particle, unseen, between
The heart's Nile and the brain's unknown Sahara:

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Rolando's fissure and the Island of Reil.
Who watches here, O mariners and surgeons?
What Pole Star lights these shores? The atom grows,
If so it will, much like a tree, its light
Orion's now, and now the Bear's, the clock
Seeking in vain its time. We will go on,
Since go we must, bending our eyes above
The little space of light we know, watching
Thought come from news, love come from thought, desire
Come to fulfilment or defeat; and all
Swinging beneath us like that mind of stars
Which alters when it must, alters for nothing,
In the long night that guides the ship to death.

IV

Came down by night with voices in his heart,
Came down from the high altar of the mountain
Where the white eagle clutched the sheep, and stones
Rattled dislodged by wind; there the wet rock
Had burned before his eyes, so bright the angel
Who beat upon it many-wondered wings,
Beating his wings, yet moveless in that place;
So that the grass a little space about
Was lighted as by lightning, and he saw
The mountain flower at the angel's feet,
The drops of water on the hanging fern,
The daisy like a star against the moss
A circle of pale green about the rock;

And he came down again, but had heard nothing;
Nor heard the village bell; nor heard his friend;
But entered his own house; and in the dark
Stood by the window, looking out at darkness;
Looking again toward the mountain altar
Where now was darkness also; but his ears

Were filled with voices, filled with a sound of singing,
The wind's voice from the mountain; and his heart
Radiant in his breast was like a lamp . . .
And from that time his house was dark no more,
But housed an angel who was silent there,
Beating bright wings, yet moveless; and the light
Went forth from him; although he said no word.

The Fetish of Simplicity

By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

I

SIMPLICITY as a literary virtue—perhaps, too, as a general virtue—is being seriously overstressed in our time. If my readers will search through book reviews they will perhaps be impressed as I was by the frequency with which "simplicity" and cognate words and phrases occur. The criterion of simplicity is, moreover, often applied to books which plainly are complex in style and structure. In such cases the critic speaks of some "fundamental," "elemental," or "classic" simplicity. For instance, in the case of such a pronounced stylist as Conrad, critics have pointed to the "simple" psychological motivation of the personal sense of honor by which all of Conrad's heroes move into complex situations. Apparently it is enough to approve of a book to find it simple. Simplicity has become a sentiment rather than a critical term having a strict meaning.

Currently, simplicity as a term of praise is accorded equally to the "lean athletics" of the followers of Hemingway, the direct factual accumulations of "realism," and the "purity" of neo-classicism—to mention only the more conspicuous schools. Their writers are believed to go at their work without literary self-consciousness and by direct methods. It is, however, obvious that negative self-consciousness is as actual as positive self-consciousness. The writers of the Hemingway school, who cut out literary effects, are as self-conscious as the writers who put them in; and the writers who aim at classic simplicity are not only self-conscious in style, but in their mental attitudes. As for a "direct" method, the accumulations of the realistic school make that impossible.

It is the writers of the Hemingway school, however, who have been chiefly responsible for the present over-accent on simplicity. They have a sturdy group-consciousness, and are the nearest approach to a school that we have come to in our recent literary history. They have been militant and apostolic, certain that their way of writing alone is sincere. Their program, which has been much affected by the concentration on single phrases of Gertrude Stein and the effort of the *sur-réalistes* to synchronize impression and event, may be summarized as follows: to suppress literary personality or "style," to substitute actual colloquial speech for conventional literary conversation, and to rule out all effects designed to stimulate emotion.

These ideas, if followed to their logical conclusions, would lead to the replacement of the writer by the dictaphone and the camera. In no other way would it be possible to suppress the personality of the writer and record conversation exactly. It is as impossible to suppress literary personality as it is to suppress one's face. The attempt leads to eccentricity or dulness, vices which may both be laid at the doors of the Hemingway school.

The writer who is intent to reproduce colloquial speech has perforce to fall back upon a colorless, average vocabulary and upon simple declarative sentences. Observation, however, will prove to anyone who takes the trouble to analyze a conversation that this is an unnatural kind of speech. All people have conversational mannerisms. Almost nobody speaks in simple declarative sentences. We speak rather in long breaths uniting disparate structures by any catch conjunctions. Besides, we speak to persuade, to convince, to excuse ourselves, to complain, and these ends require other means than the simple declarative sentence. These means are conversational devices which, when examined, prove to be either identical with or analogous to precisely those literary effects regarded as artificial by the Hemingway school.

There is another aspect, too, which tends to be for-

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gotten in these discussions. Most people are inarticulate. They read books partly to have articulated for them emotions which are or which they can believe to be their own. The writer can escape neither the task nor the responsibility. Since very few people observe and judge for themselves, they rely, to a degree which is not sufficiently realized, upon newspapers, movies, the theater, and books. Of these, books, least resorted to, are the most important, for they tend to form a common source for the others. The very career of the conversational clichés of Hemingway's characters illustrates this. Many young men and women among his readers identified themselves with the lost generation. "Swell" became the fashionable adjective; and people swore and swelled in imitation of the gay despairers of "The Sun Also Rises."

Writers who use a rhetorical conversation with a philosophical content represent one ambition of their readers. The dialogue of the Hemingway school represents another. Both may be artificial (though in any good novel the most stilted conversation will sound natural and convincing), and both are flatteries. For the Hemingway picture of a hard and disillusioned generation is a flattery; just as the previous picture of a world of sensitive souls was a flattery. Fashions will change of course. In time this style of literary conversation will seem as preposterous as the melancholy Wertherisms which soothed and flattered the generation after the Napoleonic wars.

Finally, the attempt to rule out emotional response is impossible. The emotions cannot be and are not evaded. Our generation may use the drug of alcohol and a discipline of disdain rather than Puritan restraint of emotions, but the outcome will be much the same—deformity. In the "unemotional" writing of this school what we most often have is almost medicinal extracts of emotion that are raw on the nerves. Instead of catharsis we have a kick. Repression of emotion has not cured the false expression of emotion. It produces a false restraint. We shall have to experience much of the latter before we can decide which of the two is the lesser evil.

II

In a curious way this school which has repudiated philosophy and ideas has come into alliance with the chief active philosophy of our time—behaviorism. The effort to suppress the personality of the author results in the suppression of the personalities of his characters. The author, like the reader, fulfils himself in his characters. He cannot clip his style and his ideas without correspondingly clipping down his characters. These tend more and more to be reduced to types. They are almost ideal behaviorists. Instead of the inevitability of tragedy they offer the invariability, the automatism, of type reaction.

Somewhere I remember reading of an invader who destroyed a town because one of its citizens blew a bugle. The fault of one condemned all. The attack of the neorealists upon style is reminiscent of that measure. There is no doubt that they have been honestly enraged by the abuses of literary devices. They have forgotten that style is more than its abuses. I am willing to admit that few things in literature are so offensive as bad "fine" writing. But because bad rhetoric is functionless, it must not be forgotten that rhetoric has a function. It has several important functions, one of them being to simplify, by metaphor, subtle and complex material. Some great books have been written in a bare style, but most great books have been written in an elaborate style, making use of all the resources of rhetoric. It would be unnatural in a writer deliberately to ignore devices which would intensify and allusions which would enrich his work. To write barely is to meet the problem of style, like that of the emotions, by an evasion.

Bare writing presumes a public unconscious of its cultural heritage and insensitive to style—a reading public at the level of children. Read for instance this piece from a story by Erskine Caldwell in the Winter, 1930, number of *Hound and Horn*. "Mal was a fine woodsman. In the spool mill, though, he was not such a good workman. He didn't like to work in the mill in the summer time. The mill made spools for electric wire." This sounds very much like the literature offered to immigrants as a literacy test. We have, however, a reading public which derives something from its traditional culture, and understands and enjoys allusive writing. It enjoys prose rhythms and all the riches of rhetoric. For whom then is Mr. Caldwell writing?

III

I will take advantage of a personal friendship to give what I think is a very good example of the unnaturalness of the new technique. One of the better-known novelists of the new school is Josephine Herbst, author of "Nothing Is Sacred" and "Money for Love." Miss Herbst believes that in her writing she is natural and realistic because she avoids literary effects and reproduces what she considers authentic speech. Miss Herbst is a writer with definite narrative gifts. But to know how genuine and abundant are these gifts one should hear her tell a story. It may be a casual meeting with a shopkeeper or a neighbor that she tells about, but at once it becomes an important occasion; it stirs in us that warm glow of acceptance which fine narrative makes us feel for all its characters.

I have always anticipated hearing Miss Herbst talk and I have given her closer attention than she knows. While she was speaking I made an analysis to discover what made the stories she told so effective. I found that in these spontaneous narratives she used a multitude of adjectives, metaphors, and similes, and those gestures, pauses, and facial expressions which in writing have to be conveyed by prose rhythm and the weights and intensities of well-chosen words. In her speech, in short, she is unashamedly rhetorical. However, when she sits down to write, she is overcome by scruples. She avoids the literary effects that she uses naturally in her speech. As a result, her novels have not realized to the full her narrative powers.

In what I have written I have not intended to deny that simplicity is a virtue. But it is one virtue among many. It may be a virtue for some writers and a vice for others; just as rhetoric in the hands of a master is a virtue, while in the hands of a bungler it is something ludicrous and even obscene.

The overemphasis on simplicity has had two unfortunate results. One is the effect upon writers, who are, like all other human beings, a mystery to themselves. Some never understand and never realize their powers. Most arrive at comparative self-knowledge only after years of effort and error. Most writers also are as imitative and

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envious as other human beings and dominated by the necessity of "keeping up with the Joneses." The Joneses of today happen to be the successful writers of the Hemingway school. Many writers are forcing themselves out of their natural bent and are giving us unlovely artifice in the name of simplicity.

The effect on the reading public is a flattery of one of the worst sides of its nature. Just as Werther flattered its generation by confirming its romantic sense of despair, so the vogue of simplicity is flattering our generation by confirming its sense of inferiority, its wish to relax and give up its efforts to be disciplined and socially responsible. There is apparent in contemporary thought a notion that science and industry are making it both unnecessary and impossible to be cultured. Watson's behaviorism and Spengler's "Decline of the West" have encouraged this feeling; and now in literature, the effect of which upon behavior is, I think, not sufficiently recognized, the Hemingway school is bringing forward the heroes and heroines of the new *mores*.

The dislocations of war accelerated the process. But the social acceptance of these ideas lies in the democratization of culture, which until recently was a class product. When the whole mass of the population of the Western world found itself obliged to understand a music, art, literature, science, and conduct for which only leisure and cultivation could fit it, the outcome was that some despaired and some repudiated. The despair and the repudiation penetrated upward. Even for the educated and the wealthy culture had become, by the inclusion of science, so broad, and involved so much effort in its mastery, that a tendency to revolt seized upon them. And they too felt a necessity for simplicity, and experienced a relief of tension whenever taste, by a turn of fashion, became lowbrow. Thus, although they themselves are no democrats, the writers of the Hemingway school came to regard it as their mission to establish in literature a direct contact with life, which they believed they achieved by discarding literary effects.

IV

The realization of this has made many observers pessimistic, but, I think, needlessly. New cultural publics are forming, and in time, I believe, historians will comment upon the rapidity with which the naturalization of the masses into the world of culture has proceeded. Mistakes that have been made are teaching their lessons. Educational authorities now understand that some proportion of the school population requires other than an academic training. There is already taking place, again, a stratification of audiences. The Theater Guild, the little-theater movement, the little motion-picture houses, and similar developments in the other arts are separating the public into homogeneous sections. It is a stratification by unconscious choice and to a smaller degree than ever before by inequality of opportunity. Publics will soon not be crowding together to their mutual discomfort.

Vulgarization of knowledge will not be necessary at the present pace of increase in education. Those who are ambitious to learn are acquiring the dignity to suit their ambition. The writer who does not admit a compulsion to be falsely simple and confidently trusts to find an audience receptive to the highest expression of his talent helps enormously to create such an audience, as the history of art shows by innumerable instances. Vulgarization, professional simplicity, is a poor weapon. Lenin was hostile to the propagandists who weakened their message and unintentionally falsified it by popularization. He commanded them to stop using "baby talk." And the event proved that agitators who took their task seriously and did not make concessions to stupidity and laziness got attention and respect. Their audiences appreciated being spoken to as matured men and women.

As I have said, a number of masterpieces have been written in a bare style. They are masterpieces, however, for other reasons than their simplicity; just as Shakespeare's plays are masterpieces for other reasons than their rhetoric. A work must be considered as a whole. We must decide not whether it is simple, but whether it is good.

Books

George Jean Nathan

Testament of a Critic. By George Jean Nathan. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

THOUGH it will doubtless only be regarded as an affectation of singularity on my part, I make bold to say, in spite of all that has been written to the contrary in recent years, that Mr. H. L. Mencken and Mr. George Jean Nathan have a very great deal in common. I have frequently seen in print the comment that the prose styles of the aforesaid Messrs. Mencken and Nathan bear only a superficial resemblance to each other; it may be merely my lack of discernment, but it seems to me that the resemblance is profound. So similar are their vocabularies, including their own verbal inventions, that it is by this time impossible to recall, if one ever precisely knew, which writer originated which. Their vulgarity is pretty much the same kind of vulgarity, though Mr. Nathan's leans rather more toward the lascivious and Mr. Mencken's toward the macabre. (I might remark that I here use the word vulgarity in no invidious sense, any more than I should in referring to the vulgarity of Rabelais. Mr. Nathan writes with more gusto than any other living critic of the theater, just as Mr. Mencken writes with more gusto than any other literary critic or essayist this side of the Atlantic; and I hazard the generalization that wherever one finds great gusto —one thinks of such classic examples as Rabelais, Voltaire, Swift, Carlyle—one always finds vulgarity, i. e., what are called breaches of good taste. I do not mean to imply, of course, that wherever one finds vulgarity one finds gusto.)

Mr. Nathan's attitude toward the subjects of his discourse, again, is very nearly that of Mr. Mencken. To be sure, while Mr. Mencken prefers to thwack his victims on the cranium, Mr. Nathan more often aims for their pantaloons; while Mr. Mencken suggests a Roman emperor turning thumbs down, Mr. Nathan reminds one more of a small boy thumbing his nose and making obscene noises with his mouth: but this distinction could easily be carried too far. Finally, the very rhythm and sentence structure of Mr. Mencken and Mr. Nathan are so alike that it requires a sensitive ear to detect the difference. Mr. Mencken's sentences are on the whole more dextrously managed, more compact, and land with a more resounding thud; but Mr. Nathan's achieve a more rapid movement. In Mr. Mencken one hears more of the drum and in Mr. Nathan more of the flute and piccolo. But when all this is set down the distinction remains a tenuous one. Anyone who does not think so may review the old *Smart Set* and tell us who wrote what among the double-signature pieces.

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There can be little doubt, in brief, that the stylistic debt of Mr. Nathan to Mr. Mencken is a heavy one. Mr. Nathan's sentences are managed vastly better than they were fifteen years ago, and the Mencken influence is unmistakable. But I do not mean to fall in with the widespread critical notion that Mr. Nathan is a mere ex-satellite of Mr. Mencken, or that, like the moon, he shines by a reflected light—that it was merely his association with Mr. Mencken that brought him into prominence. Doubtless the association hastened his recognition, but his position as a critic today would still be pretty much what it is if that association had never been publicly heard of. If his prose is an imitation of Mr. Mencken's prose, then it is the only successful one—successful because perfectly fused with his own personality, and supported by a native fertility of pungent simile and epithet perhaps equal to Mr. Mencken's own. To return to our astronomical figures, we may say that Mr. Nathan and Mr. Mencken were twin stars, revolving about each other and affecting each other's orbits.

Certain differences, to be sure, there have always been between them. Mr. Mencken's heroes are Huxley and Nietzsche, and he is probably most comfortable with his coat off; Mr. Nathan is a dandy and a man about town, with leanings toward the philosophy of the Cyrenaics and Oscar Wilde. Mr. Mencken's interests have been drifting more and more away from pure literature into politics, biology, and theological speculations; Mr. Nathan clings pretty close to Forty-second Street. It seems impossible to drag Mr. Nathan out of the theater and impossible to drag Mr. Mencken into one. Mr. Nathan points his difference from Mr. Mencken by remarking in the present volume:

> Since we are all now duly and perfectly aware that America has its full share of Rotarians, Kiwanians, and Ku Kluxers, not to mention the Anti-Saloon League, the W. C. T. U., the Y. M. C. A., the D. A. R., and the Methodist Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals, we may as well stop harping on the subject.

We are all, it might be added, quite as duly and as perfectly aware that America has its full share of bad playwrights, bad critics, absurd talkies, and preposterous actors, but no recognition of this general awareness—fortunately—prevents Mr. Nathan from harping on fresh examples.

But let us drop this comparison, which is perhaps becoming tedious, and look at Mr. Nathan by himself. His merits are many, and not to be briefly catalogued. The writing of few critics is so continuously entertaining for its own sake. He has the sharpest realistic discernment of any theatrical reviewer now in regular practice. No other has so keen a scent for every shade of sham, pose, affectation. His intelligence is certainly as high as, and his range of knowledge of the drama—European and American, ancient and contemporary—equal and perhaps superior to, that of any other dramatic critic in these parts; yet though in this sense a highbrow he is never taken in by highbrowism. He has repeated often and in many forms his belief that "the place of the theater in the community is infinitely less the place of the university, the studio, and the art gallery than the place of the circus, the rathskeller, and the harem." He is for "horse-play, belly-laughter, pretty girls . . . farce, flippancy, folderol." He has argued year in and year out against the insufferably persistent notion "that a bad play that views life soberly is somehow better than an equally bad one that views it lightly." Mr. Nathan, again, is less taken in than most of his colleagues by the mere themes of plays, their so-called philosophy. He never, for example, confuses "a mere loud statement of some hitherto theatrically unspoken phase of sex with meritorious drama." (He finds that the Anglo-American sex drama, on the whole, "resembles nothing so much as a guinea-pig that has gone intellectual.") Mr. Nathan's exuberant flow of words, once more, giving the impression of a man writing as rapidly and spontaneously as he talks, disguises the solid work and tedious research that must go into so much of his writing. Ten pages in the present volume, for instance, set out to prove that Bernard Shaw, in spite of his occasional efforts to mask the fact, has not only an aversion to sex but a fear of it; these pages prove their contention completely and unanswerably; but it takes little imagination to realize the heavy spade work that Mr. Nathan, in spite of his pose as a gay and indolent fellow careering down the primrose highways of the world, put behind them. Mr. Nathan has for years been accused of a mere *contra mundum* attitude. That he loves contradiction for its own sake, that he may even enjoy it when his boos and catcalls turn out to be solos, I should be the last to deny; but when one looks over his record for a quarter of a century one finds it amazingly sane and balanced; one finds that his perspective and his standards have seldom deserted him, while the enthusiasms of most of his colleagues have come to look as ludicrous as he represented them to be at the time. Mr. Nathan has always held that Eugene O'Neill stood in a class apart among American dramatists, that, in spite of his failures, he is the only one who has what may be called size. The truth of this judgment has become more and more obvious with the passage of the years.

Perhaps it is not too much to say that Mr. Nathan is the most completely honest of our theater critics. By honesty I mean to imply certain intellectual as well as moral qualities—independence, the ability to remain unswayed by other judgments, the courage to state one's position unequivocally and to make enemies in all camps. We may note in the present book, for example, the wholesale consideration of American dramatists, with brief summaries of the importance of each. I quote one sentence in illustration:

> The so-called New Playwrights group, John Howard Lawson, Em Jo Basshe, John Dos Passos, E. E. Cummings, and Michael Gold, disclose nothing; they may be dismissed.

The point here is not whether this sweeping judgment is just or not; the point is that we have here a group of writers that have been highly praised by literary critics and by some of the dramatic critics that Mr. Nathan might be expected to respect most, and that, not through moral indignation or fear of their revolutionary social doctrines or lack of hospitality toward technical innovations, Mr. Nathan can still dismiss them peremptorily and unapologetically.

May we not say of his dramatic criticism what he himself says of Shaw's—that what he has brought to it, aside from his own contribution, is the gift of independence and courage to others?

HENRY HAZLITT

A Daniel for Shylock

The Last Days of Shylock. By Ludwig Lewisohn. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

"THE ISLAND WITHIN" established Ludwig Lewisohn as one of the more considerable of contemporary novelists. It was not only an important contribution to fiction; it was proof that Lewisohn had found himself, that he had at last discovered a tradition that he could accept, a cause that he could follow, an interpretation of life that he could believe. In "The Island Within" Lewisohn the propagandist and Lewisohn the artist both found complete expression without sacrifice of either unity of form or unity of tone. The reader of Mr. Lewisohn's earlier works could only regard this book, perhaps the most nearly perfect thesis novel of our generation, as evidence that the author had achieved both intellectual and aesthetic maturity.

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In view of the effectiveness of the legend introduced in the last book of "The Island Within," and in view of Lewisohn's expressed desire that Jews should be more familiar with their own traditions, it is not surprising that in his new novel he has turned from the contemporary scene to an earlier period. For his purposes the story of Shylock offered two advantages: it permitted him to redress an ancient wrong and to introduce certain colorful and little-known episodes from that saga of suffering, the history of the Jews. There was, however, one danger involved in the utilization of this story that should perhaps have outweighed, in Mr. Lewisohn's mind, the advantages: there is only one Shylock, Shakespeare's Shylock; no antecedent tradition justifies a different tradition; one must take the merchant as Shakespeare presents him. And there can be no doubt that Shakespeare thought of Shylock as a malign, avaricious, relentless person. The actors who have tried to make of Shylock a tragic and even an appealing character have had some assistance from the text, for Shakespeare was too wise a playwright to make his Jew such a monstrosity as Marlowe's Barabas; but Shakespeare was writing for an audience with prejudices he probably shared and certainly did not intend to affront. Shylock's defeat was planned to arouse not pity but righteous joy, and his character was shaped to warrant that emotion.

Lewisohn, then, was confronted in the first half of his book with the task of reconciling his Shylock and Shakespeare's. Does Shakespeare make Shylock vindictive? Then Lewisohn will explain his vindictiveness by telling what he has suffered, by presenting Antonio as an active enemy of the Jews, by explaining that Shylock wanted merely to humiliate and not to kill the Christian merchant. But the effort is futile. Lewisohn's Shylock is simply not vindictive; he is noble, long-suffering, not forgiving perhaps but certainly not vengeful. This Shylock would never have put his hostility to Antonio even partly on the ground that he had lowered the rate of interest; this Shylock would never have lamented the loss of his ducats equally with the loss of his daughter. Try as he will, Lewisohn cannot believe in Shakespeare's Shylock; he has created a different person of that name. And in the opening chapters, which are necessarily filled with echoes of the play, the two Shylocks appear, first one and then the other, as confusingly as the twins in "The Comedy of Errors."

After the chapters that are located in Venice Lewisohn has his own way, and his Shylock emerges, growing clearer and clearer until finally the other Shylock vanishes from the reader's mind. In this part of the story the absence of any pre-Shakespearean tradition is an asset, for Lewisohn can invent for Shylock whatever adventures suit his purpose. Escaping from Venice shortly after his forced baptism, the merchant journeys to Constantinople, to Joseph Nassi, Jewish treasurer of the Sultan. Nassi has received permission from his master to rebuild the city of Tiberias, and Shylock is placed in charge of the enterprise. Thus Lewisohn is able to tell a story that, in a remarkable and tragic way, parallels certain events in the recent history of Palestine. After the failure of this experiment in repatriation, Shylock goes to live in Cyprus, where he eventually finds Jessica and where, with her and her sons, he spends the closing years of his life.

"The Last Days of Shylock" is, despite the unsolved problem of its central character, a moving book, written with great dignity and much beauty of a somber sort. There is one point, and one that ought to be noted, in which Lewisohn's Shylock and Shakespeare's are identical. Heine once said that as Portia represents the grace and beauty of the Renaissance, so Shylock represents the stern hostility of the Jew to art. Lewisohn's Shylock, though there is a moment when he recognizes the grandeur of the church of San Marco, and though he wonders for a time if he has not too rudely shut Jessica away from the gaiety and charm of the city, is fundamentally antipathetic to the virtues of the Renaissance; his high ethical purpose makes no place for beauty. One remembers what Lewisohn himself wrote of Venice in "Cities and Men":

> Beauty is not enough. Too high a price can be paid for it. . . . Could Italy or the world once more be free from the oppressor, could one lasting blow for liberty and peace and mercy be struck at such a price, I would stand unmoved while all this golden beauty, which stirs my soul no less than others', toppled forever into the overwhelming sea.

In these words Lewisohn has put himself on record as being, if there must be a choice, on Shylock's side, not on Portia's. But fortunately he has written many books bearing witness to the fact that beauty does indeed stir and haunt his soul, that in him love of righteousness and love of beauty are fused. The sense of a strong ethical purpose is perhaps Lewisohn's most important contribution to the existing cultural situation, just as it is certainly the quality that gives substance and force to his books; but it is important precisely because it is wedded to that other quality without which the desire for righteousness has done so much damage in the world.

GRANVILLE HICKS

The Facts About Prohibition

The Dry Decade. By Charles Merz. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $3.

HERE at last is an honest book on prohibition. Mr. Merz, although a wet, neither denounces nor defends. He is content with stating facts.

When Mr. Billy Sunday preached his funeral sermon over the presumably dead body of John Barleycorn there were thousands of upright and earnest citizens who echoed with a loud Amen. These good people were willing to admit that the liquor traffic was all right in its place but its place was in hell. The friends of prohibition were confident that the dragon had been slain. The liquor traffic with its attendant evils of drunkenness, crime, and vice had been finally banished to the outer darkness of illegality.

The experiment began January 16, 1920, with an "era of good feeling." The problem of enforcement was scarcely mentioned. Mr. Wheeler was sure that five million dollars a year would be ample and that this sum "could be reduced when the need disappears." The battle had been fought, the victory won, and the dry hosts left the field. Congress, having been bombarded for generations by both wets and drys, was happy to think that the "liquor question" had finally been disposed of.

This optimism was short-lived. Within six months "every major question which is now prominent in the problem of enforcement had already raised its head." The diversion of industrial alcohol, congestion in the courts, non-cooperation on the part of the States, home brewing, illegal prescriptions for medicinal liquor, and smuggling on a large scale—all had appeared.

The States promptly dumped their enforcement burdens upon Washington. The prima donna had appeared and the supporting cast fell away. But like most prima donnas the national government was long on sound and short on action. When Congress did act, it was not to provide adequate resources for enforcement of the law but to provide more law.

With about three thousand poorly paid employees the Prohibition Bureau in 1924 faced this problem:

> . . . to prosecute 40,000 prohibition cases in the federal courts, to guard 18,000 miles of seacoast and of border, to safeguard

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against diversion of 57,000,000 gallons of industrial alcohol, and with what help it could obtain from the States and municipalities to prevent the manufacture of intoxicating liquor in the kitchens or the basements of 20,000,000 homes.

Congress in 1920 appropriated slightly over $2,000,000 for enforcement. This was increased from year to year until it reached a total of $12,000,000 in 1929—but it is still far short of the $300,000,000 which Dr. Doran says is necessary.

The States, after the fashion of Congress, have been willing to provide legislation but not the wherewithal to make it effective. In 1923 they spent a total of $548,629 for enforcement. In 1927 this total had increased to $689,855 spent by eighteen States. In other words, the States were spending on the enforcement of prohibition about one-fourth of what they spent on monuments and parks and about one-eighth of what was spent on the enforcement of their fish and game laws.

The drys have never ceased to denounce New York for repealing its enforcement act. Yet the record under that law was not encouraging. While it was in force, a total of 6,902 cases was presented to grand juries. Of these 6,074, or 88 per cent, were dismissed; 496 cases, or 7.2 per cent, were settled by pleas of guilty; and only twenty cases, or 3 per cent, resulted in conviction and jail sentence following a trial by jury.

Faced with glutted calendars, the federal authorities resorted to "bargain" days to clear the docket.

> Here justice was dispensed with a broad hand and no necessity for juries. On set days in the court calendars, large numbers of bootleggers, restaurant proprietors, hotel keepers, waiters, smugglers, distillers, and go-betweens would plead guilty to violation of the law, provided they were assured in advance that they would avoid jail sentences and escape with fines.

These pleas of guilty, without jury trial, accounted for over 90 per cent of the convictions by 1925. "The fact of the matter is," says Mr. Merz, "that by 1925 the government had established a new license system, differing from the old license system only in the fact that it was low license rather than high license."

Lacking the necessary facilities for systematic and consistent enforcement, the Prohibition Bureau resorted to a series of spectacular "drives." With the help of the coast guard, rum row was routed; then the battle shifted to the industrial-alcohol front; thence to the harrying of petty patrons of night clubs and resorts; once again to a war on medicinal and sacramental wine, and finally to the "big fellows" who operate the huge stills. But if the enforcement agents were alert, the "conspirators" were more so. It began to appear impossible to suppress the ubiquitous small stills which operated as feeders to the "big fellows."

From the beginning there has been a policy of gambling in generals. Prohibition directors and commissioners have been changed so rapidly that one has scarcely taken off his coat and entered upon the inevitable task of "reorganization" than his head is demanded and his successor is on the way.

In the meantime a mighty war of words was being waged between wets and drys. The wets saw only the wholesale corruption, vice, and crime resulting from the failure of enforcement. The drys saw increased prosperity, happy homes, and smiling faces in a "saloonless land." With the possible exception of Professor Feldman, whose book Mr. Merz does not mention, there has been little effort to get at the facts. The thing has long since become a King Charles head with both factions.

Upon this scene in 1929 came Mr. Hoover.

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And so a fact-finding commission was appointed and set to work.

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By all means read this book. It does not point a way but it gives us our bearings. PETER H. ODEGARD

A Duchess and a Dancer

Education of a Princess. A Memoir by Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia. The Viking Press. $3.50.

Theatre Street. The Reminiscences of Tamara Karsavina. E. P. Dutton and Company. $5.

HERE are two books which may be counted as pleasant by-products of the Russian Revolution. They were written by women who, if the Czar still ruled, would doubtless today be following a set and preordained way of life in St. Petersburg. Karsavina, perhaps, would make occasional comet-like flights around the world, following the bright orbit of a successful *prima ballerina*; but Marie would have settled down, none too happily, to the precise routine of Russian royalty. The war and the revolution changed all that. In a court so dull that nothing seemed ever to happen, everything suddenly happened in a succession of terrific explosions; and when the clouds had cleared there was no court, and Marie and Karsavina were blown clean out of their niches into new worlds.

Marie's story goes to prove that given a fair chance princesses may be people. Even when she was a child she showed traces of ability and personality—she secretly learned to lace her own boots—but these flare-ups were quickly stifled. Though a grand duchess in a country ruled by an absolute monarch, she was taught not to command but to obey; to be submissive, dutiful, domestic. This was the temper of the royal family and the court. When Marie's father, an uncle of the Czar, took as his second wife a woman who was only a countess he was speedily banished to Paris. Marie and her brother were brought up by their cold and rigid aunt, a sister of the Czarina. Both of these women were granddaughters of Victoria of England and had spent their youth under her ponderous influence. It is impossible not to suspect that some of the indomitable dulness of that magnificent royal bourgeoise had percolated through them into the Russian court. At any rate Marie was fed on a depressing diet of don'ts and better nots; yet when the war came to set her free she braved her own incompetence and got down to work—bandaging wounds, scrubbing floors, and actually running a large war hospital. And when the revolution swept her remaining landmarks away, along with her property and security, she put up with discomforts and dangers quite as gallantly as the more considerable part of the population that had never shared the repressions of royalty.

She finally ducked out of Russia, but one can hardly blame her for leaving a country which had been deliberately rendered uninhabitable for grand duchesses. The only spot at which Marie disappointed me was when she fainted at the sight of several sailors, with "their ladies in woolen, colored kerchiefs," lounging in the ex-imperial box at the ballet. For a girl who had seen all the life—and death, too—that Marie had seen, a thirty-minute swoon seems excessive on such provocation. I can only conclude that box and sailors suddenly lost their material identity and loomed as symbols of all that was gone, and that Marie's nervous system responded with a general collapse such as her cool intelligence would never have tolerated. With almost no other exception, she reveals a vigorous personality and surprising perception. She knew what was going on around her. She knew herself. And she has mixed her history and autobiography with skill and a sharp sense of relative values.

Much the same may be said of the reminiscences of Karsavina, though her writing is of a less conscious, sophisticated order. The early lives of the two women were in several ways similar. Karsavina, like Marie, was subjected to years of rigid discipline and regimentation. But a fundamental difference existed which makes all comparisons empty and unreal. Marie's training was for no other purpose than to satisfy the empty ideals of upper-class propriety. Karsavina's was directed to the end of producing a great artist. This difference was reflected in the attitude of the two girls. Marie was bored and feebly rebellious. Karsavina worked like a little fiend to accomplish each step in her laborious progress, to graduate from the Theater School, to dance at the Marinsky Theater, to become at last a *prima ballerina*. These aims made everything worth while—endless practice, stern governesses, brown dresses, even having one's hair combed with a curry comb. With simplicity and humor Karsavina has told the story of her years on "Theatre Street," and has brought to life that compact world of men and women and children all soberly engaged in the achievement of a disciplined perfection. One of the most beguiling incidents she describes is the descent of Isadora Duncan, like an exploding rocket, into those ordered ranks. The tale of her later experiences, especially her work under the inspired direction of Diaghilev, is invaluable as a record of one of the world's great artistic adventures.

The stories of Marie and Karsavina cover almost the same span of years in the same city. They seldom overlap. Put together they form a fragment of a civilization that is not only gone but is already in need of historical reconstruction.

FREDA KIRCHWEY

Mr. Shorey's Plato

Plato: The Republic. With an English Translation by Paul Shorey. Volume I, Books I-V. The Loeb Classical Library. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $2.50.

THESE are the days of the dictatorship of the literati. The grammarians, the rhetoricians, and the poets have taken over the commonwealth of human beings and are reapportioning the territory in the realm of mind. A Northern professor of English asks us whether we are humanist or naturalist, Southern poets ask us whether we are industrialist or agrarian, and philologists from far corners of the globe ask us whether we are children or adult, whether we think in images or abstractions. For the most part we are happy to be ruled by these makers of dilemmas, since we have light opinions and little familiarity with ideas. It therefore has a certain dramatic interest that Plato's "Republic," which is at least in some respects an attack on grammar, rhetoric, and poetics, should be translated by a grammarian with rhetorical and poetical affiliations.

But it is of more than passing interest that Paul Shorey

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should be translating Plato for the Loeb Library. In the first place, this library is the one remaining hope of keeping the ancient classics and what they say effective in the modern world about which we hear so much. The educational devices for bringing students to the classics have failed. Now the few remaining classical scholars are bringing the classics to the student. In the second place, it is important that the work of translation should be done by first-rate scholars, since translators' minds act like sieves, saving only what they can distinguish. Thus the character of whatever renaissance may result from these translations will be determined fundamentally by the quality of scholarship that goes into them. It is therefore important to estimate the quality of mind of the translator before one draws conclusions about the translation and what Plato in this instance says through it. There is no doubt about the first-rank quality of Paul Shorey's scholarship. We may be very grateful to the editors and to him for bringing this quality to bear on "The Republic."

But there is still another kind of judgment to make, one which is suggested by the ancient and medieval divisions in linguistic science. There is the grammarian who studies words—their forms, variations, and interrelations. There is the rhetorician who studies literary forms—their decorative properties and their practical effectiveness. There is the poetic critic who loves grammar and rhetoric for what they can help to express. Finally, there is the dialectician who refers all these to ideas, and notes the logical locus of what is being said. Each sort of scholar has his proper excellence, but there are few who actually achieve adequacy in all respects. Plato's "Republic" has materials that call for all these critical capacities. It has an abundance of verbal subtlety; it carries a heavy load of morals; it is the European prototype of intellectual comedy; and it dialectically reveals a large portion of the ideal basis of Greek thought. Mr. Shorey is primarily a grammarian, but he also has a strong rhetorical and dramatic sense. I think we can safely say on the evidence of the present translation that his interest is not dialectical.

It may be possible for an original author to meet the demands of all these literary sciences and make his work an incarnation of their ideals. One is tempted to define Plato's genius in precisely this way. On the other hand, it is quite certainly true that a translator will have to fall short in some respects just at the points where he achieves excellence in others. The grammarian will show his leanings when he is faced with an idiom; he will choose nicety of verbal detail and let rhetorical effect, aesthetic harmony, and even clarity of ideas go. We may be grateful to Mr. Shorey where he instructs us in Greek verbal mechanics and nuance although he makes us read the passage two or three times to see what Plato means. We may enjoy the tang of Plato's Greek conversational style even when its ambiguity when turned into English leaves us a little poorer in ideas. We may lose the point of the text in following Mr. Shorey's voluminous and sometimes labyrinthine footnotes, and we may even in the end wish to read Mr. Shorey rather than Plato because the comments are so instructive in many subjects and so entertaining when they report Mr. Shorey's associational processes. But there will be times when even the lay reader will stop reading and sigh for a word of encouragement from the dialectician. Certainly the philosopher who has labored with the Greek with the help of Adam's commentary, or lost himself in Mr. Jowett's honeyed and pious version, will be a little disappointed in at least these first five books of "The Republic." He will still wish perversely that Plato had translated his own work into mathematical symbols, or that Mr. Shorey had been a philosopher instead of a philologist.

Perhaps this comment is not fair. Mr. Shorey has written his philosophical interpretation of Plato in "The Unity of Plato's Thought," and a translation is a good place to let us see just how he has used the original material. The two are complementary. There is also objective love of the original text which carries over the kind of vitality that we call poetic into his translation. If he has not helped us, he still has not spoiled Plato. After all, there may be less logic in "The Republic" than philosophers have often supposed. There never has been a philosophical writer who tempted his reader more to read between the lines, and it is always difficult to disentangle Plato from his victim in the end. It will be interesting to see the forthcoming second volume to which Mr. Shorey promises to attach some of his conclusions. Perhaps the grammarian and the dialectician will meet there.

SCOTT BUCHANAN

Welcome the Counterfeit

A Night in Kurdistan. By Jean-Richard Bloch. Translated from the French by Stephen Haden-Guest. Simon and Schuster. $2.50.

THERE is talent in every line of "A Night in Kurdistan." Few living novelists could hope to compete with M. Jean-Richard Bloch, the well-known author of "—— & Co." and frequent contributor to the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, in the matter of "style." He is a master in the application of the Best French Literary Manner. And it is because he is talented that a worthless book like "A Night in Kurdistan" should be condemned with especial severity.

In his Prelude M. Bloch informs us that despite his love of France he has never been able to overcome a nostalgic inclination toward the East, "the Continent of Passion." His story, therefore, is to be an imaginative excursion to Asia. Its hero is Saad, a young Mohammedan warrior who is sent as a spy into the Christian city of Kasir to open its gates to his comrades. Disguised as a merchant, he contrives to be invited to spend the night at the home of a prominent Christian. Both the wife and daughter of the Christian fall in love with him. After nightfall he permits himself to be seduced by the wife, but at the climax of their wordless embrace he recovers his self-mastery and kills her without a sound by biting her jugular vein. He also kills her sleeping husband and hurries to the city gate to prepare the entrance of his comrades. Kasir is entered by the Mohammedans and sacked. Saad defends his former host's daughter, but cannot prevent her, when she learns the nature of his relation to her mother, from stabbing herself. When he returns to his mountain home and wife he is unhappy because he is in love with the Christian girl. Finally he decides to return to Kasir in another disguise, in the hope of seeing her. (It turns out that she had not killed herself, but is well once again and more beautiful than ever.) As a blind beggar and convert to Christianity he contrives once more to enter her home. Slowly she becomes aware of his identity, but when he reveals himself she delivers him up for execution. At the moment when he is about to be stoned to death she runs to his side and they die together.

There are several reasons why it is not possible to attach significance to this story. The best is that M. Bloch himself did not. It is evident on every page that he cares neither for Saad nor for Asia nor for what happens, but solely for the preservation of his Manner—that is, the Best French Literary Manner. He puts such an extraordinary valuation upon this Manner, in fact, that he imagines it exempts him from the obligation to seek each moment for a better understanding of his characters and his story. Therefore he floats above the scene at a great height and occasionally drops a golden word which is supposed to let us know that he has observed and understood the whole of life.

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There is no need to describe the Best French Literary Manner. Everybody will recognize the following, which is the first paragraph of the book:

> O France whom I love so dearly, people of France in whose midst I have so willingly, so ardently lived and fought, I would I could feel myself born of you, like unto you. But the language of affinity calls more loudly than my wish.

The last paragraph of the book, however, reveals something which is peculiar to M. Bloch:

> Here ends the tale. In Anatolia they often say to the newly married: "We wish for you that your deaths may be as happy as the deaths of Evanthia and Saad."
>
> Better than he who tells this tale, God knows the heart of the matter.

There is something about the mellifluous humility of the last sentence which is peculiarly ostentatious. (Of course there was no need for the sentence: until then M. Bloch had assumed the paternal omniscience of God for himself.) If we look closely we find that ostentation is the central vice of M. Bloch. After each line he cocks his head to listen, his shrewd eyes gleaming, for our applause. There are few books which are so consistently inspired by vanity.

It was his vanity that led him to betray his talent and produce something of no value, a counterfeit. (Perhaps on second thought his talent is less than we imagined. After all, he has but a slight sense of character, scene, or locale; no particular insight, and no message at all—little, in fact, except his "style." Perhaps we never admire the engraver's hand except he has wasted it on a counterfeit, and never think of style unless, as here, it is *appliqué*.) In any case, there is not a page of "A Night in Kurdistan" which does not seek to win our applause by suggesting something else that we have read before. As a result, when we have concluded this well-wrought imitation our inner experience amounts to zero.

The book should have a success in America. First, because so many will like its style. Second, because of its erotic passages. Third—best reason of all—because it is a counterfeit. We all know that the bank is the only place in America where the counterfeit is not liked. Art like this, in particular, is made immediately to feel at home.

GERALD SYKES

Brandes on Voltaire

Voltaire. By Georg Brandes. Translated by Otto Kruger and Pierce Butler. Albert and Charles Boni. Two volumes. $10.

IT is a little hard to understand just why these two massive volumes should have been rescued for us from the Danish (or the German—it is not made clear which language is being translated from). That they form a just and vivid appraisal of a great figure is undeniable; but they add nothing, on the interpretative side, to Morley's classic volume; and from the point of view of scholarship little that is new appears to have been added by Brandes to the labors of the French researchers. He tells the story well, but it is one that has been too often told, perhaps, to enlist our attention very vitally.

Throughout, the sustaining viewpoint is that of the humanitarian-liberal-rationalist, the progressive "good European," so admirably typified by Georg Brandes, himself a son of the enlightenment. The modern reader, as he peruses these careful and sympathetic pages, feels constantly the lack of the Lytton Strachey touch. To such a reader, perhaps, it is more important to point out the superficial and literary quality of Voltaire's skepticism (eighteenth-century "scientific" optimism with its

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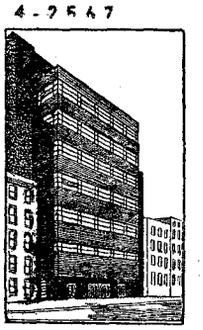

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fangs bared) than to retell for the fiftieth time the history of the Calas and Sirven affairs. One would like to see it demonstrated, possibly, that Voltaire, far from being a "mystery," was great in his very lack of complication; that despite his versatility he was at the opposite pole from the Da Vinci universal-genius type. To a critic of Brandes's background, such misgivings, such questions, could never occur; he never departs from an attitude of judicial hero-worship.

The book is far less valuable for its tracing of Voltaire's career than for its frequent brilliant vignettes of minor eighteenth-century personalities.

CLIFTON P. FADIMAN

Books in Brief

A Roving Commission. My Early Life. By the Right Honorable Winston S. Churchill. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.50.

Mr. Churchill has already recounted a good deal of his part in making history in the three volumes of "The World Crisis" and in "The Aftermath," the latter bringing the story down to 1928. In "A Roving Commission" he goes back to the cradle and comes down to the time when, returning to England after the South African war, the "khaki" election landed him in the House of Commons. It is a racy narrative, vividly and at times brilliantly written, abounding in good stories, striking descriptions of personalities, and caustic comments on matters as varied as primary and public-school education, military training, polo-playing in India, and politics. More than most English public men, Mr. Churchill has had the fortune to "land on his feet" in difficult situations, and he lets us see the play of luck, not unmixed with dash and skill on his own part, in his experiences as a newspaper correspondent in India with a military command that did not want him, his campaign with Kitchener in Egypt and the Sudan, and his theatrical escape from the prison camp to which the Boers consigned him. Of this last adventure, told in part and with some necessary variants shortly after, he here gives for the first time a full report. Through the narrative runs a note of affectionate regard for his mother, Lady Randolph Churchill, whose devotion was constant and resourceful. It would be hard to find a more entertaining book of reminiscence, or one from which, considering the rapidity of the advance and the spectacular nature of some of the experiences, the tone of self-satisfaction is more conspicuously absent.

Marcel Proust: Sa Révélation Psychologique. By Arnaud Dandieu. Oxford University Press. $1.50.

M. Dandieu's book is for the advanced Proustian rather than the beginner. No work of recent years, not even "Ulysses," has given rise to so many commentaries as has "A la recherche du temps perdu," and no other recent work could have been so fruitfully approached from so many different angles. M. Dandieu has concentrated on what seems to him the most fundamental consideration, namely, Proust's conception of reality. In his analysis he has drawn upon anthropology, psychology, and philosophy. He has tried to show how Proust's evocation of the past resembles primitive magic, and how his preoccupation with this process resulted in a kind of split personality. Dandieu does not, however, attack Proust, as some critics have done, on the ground that his work ends in moral and psychological chaos; on the contrary, he maintains that the final result, after the process of dissociation and disintegration is complete, is a kind of recomposition of the human personality. Much of Dandieu's discussion is illuminating, especially his comments on Proust's theories as expressed in "Le temps retrouvé."

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A Woman on Her Way. By John Van Druten. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.

It is only in the last few pages of this novel that the events which make up the story of Elinor, female novelist, kind friend, and disappointed lover, achieve anything near interest. The round of gossip and literature and beds that Mr. Van Druten spins his lengthy novel on is tiresome in the extreme. Snatches of dialogue, an amusing anecdote occasionally brighten its waste spaces, but none of the characters become more than names with the exception of a little typist, whose genuineness is due principally to her bit part and to her resemblance to the characters in Frank Swinnerton's novels. Perhaps it is the deadly evenness of the narrative, the flatness of the style, or the boring commonplaceness of the events which makes this novel by the author of "Young Woodley" so unimpressive. If "the sterility of sophistication" was his topic, then he might have made the sterility of his characters at least positive enough to merit the space he devotes to them.

Back Street. By Fannie Hurst. Cosmopolitan Book Corporation. $2.50.

This is an absorbing novel. It seems a bit over-written. And Miss Hurst is guilty, as usual, of exaggeration, of piling things on too heavily, of stacking her cards through a sense of logical necessity. Things have to *fit* a little too neatly in her world (as in that of many others) and so she resorts to glamorous depths and heights, logically worked out but a bit obviously arranged. But "Back Street" certainly ranks with the best work she has done. It is the story of Ray Schmitt, the "tony" and somewhat "fly" Ray (to adopt the slang belonging to her early years). Men of all kinds like Ray; and Ray likes them. She can't help it. She is born the good fellow. But she finally falls in love. And in her love for the mediocre-souled Walter Saxel that lasts so many years positions are reversed. Ray is the true wife of this rising banker who grows so enormously wealthy. Corinne, the wife, is much more the petted and lavishly supported mistress. There is a curious streak in this Walter, who cannot bear that Ray should be out of contact with him for five days, which makes him keep her down to bare necessities—though he forbids her to keep her job. And so when Walter dies she is left stranded. The rest is true and tragic and not without a certain beauty. Miss Hurst has done her backgrounds with complete understanding. And she has described an interesting girl and woman, one without great abilities or special qualifications, with an insight which should have wide appeal.

Naked on Roller Skates. By Maxwell Bodenheim. Horace Liveright. $2.

Maxwell Bodenheim has written another of his wild-eyed novels in which words, words, words, big words and little words, are scattered about like bullets from the mouth of a machine-gun. If one could distil the essence of these novels into a long poem like, for instance, Mr. March's "The Wild Party," one would have a brilliant and penetrating study of a certain stratum of American life. But amid the profundities, the bits of sheer illuminating insight, the powerful juxtaposition of nerve-racked minds, taut muscles, and romantic sordidness, there is a good deal of nonsense. Words and figures carry Mr. Bodenheim away. At his best he *is* a better poet than novelist. The present novel, which is much superior to its absurd title, is a study of Terry Barberbilt, wanderer, adventurer, old-timer, who has gone through the mill of a life of dangerous, wandering adventure; of Ruth, the Connecticut girl who is eager for life, for experience, for adventurous living, who marries him; and of three backgrounds—a Connecticut town, Harlem, and lower Eighth Avenue. The chief characters are "proletarians"; gentility and the passion for property play little part in their lives.

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The Gentle Libertine. By Colette. Translated by R. C. B. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

The sexual dissatisfaction of a female, bourgeois, French moron is described in this novel by Colette. Some of it seems a bit thin—though Minne's childhood moods and vagrancies are, certainly, delicately written of—and nothing seems precisely actual about any of the characters save the libertine herself. The tone of the amours is, too, vaguely reminiscent of the Anatole France of "The Red Lily." What is most admirable in the novel as a novel is the plan whereby the adolescent status of Minne's emotions is maintained in maturity—or, at least, in adult circles—by omitting, suddenly, any account of a considerable passage of time. Since the omitted interval might well have been the crucial time in Minne's girlhood, it might have been difficult to sustain Minne's adolescent attitude. The method is a trick, but like most of Colette's sly tricks of style, a good one. And the end of Minne's nymphic career in her husband's arms is as impressive as was the end of "Chéri."

The Goblin Woman. By Rose O'Neill. With Drawings by the Author. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

An elegant lady of obscure origins descends in a thickness of prose upon a New England town and causes much elaborate talk about herself and others. Eventually she goes off to Italy with the very handsomest gentleman in the place, his marriage is annulled, and the book ends cloudily. But some of the characters intervening are amusing, the events of sufficient complexity, and, occasionally, a pleasant sentence slips through the heavy prose.

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Art

A Painter of the Machine Age

THE role of the painter, under the modern American economy, has been on the whole an unhappy and marginal one, largely dependent upon the supply and the demands of retired business dynasts or their snobbish wives. As to the young contemporary painter, it has seemed at times as if the "system" required that he be dead—dead as Romney or Gainsborough, so that one of his pictures could be sold, "together with an appropriate chair," by some forehanded merchant of Fifth Avenue.

These conditions still prevail, I say; and despite the promising changes in the exterior aspect of our cities, the recent upheavals in architecture, the public congestion in the rooms of the Modern Museum, the dead hand of the past still lies with surprising weight upon everything here that pertains to the life of art. Knowing the strategic, vital role that great artists have played in past civilization—Egyptian, Grecian, or Florentine—by giving expression to the religion or lore of peoples, who could be more aware of missed opportunity and immense intangible loss than the modern painter; above all, as he stares at the confusion, the planlessness, with which the industrial city of today has casually flung itself up, grandiose from the distant view, bitterly disappointing to the close scrutiny? Business has been rich for a period, and so business architecture and decoration have made notable gains. But aside from the thrilling line which engineering boldness contributes, how often the substance and surface is wanting in all meaning, or reflects the most negligible taste or fashion? How many proud skyscrapers, severely cubist in soul, are clad in medieval costumes, or ornamented with sculptured replicas of rococo German Rhine maidens?

Faced with this confusion of values and purposes, reflecting

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the deeper confusion and, almost, cowardice at bottom, the young American painter Henry Billings has sought to evolve a solution, logical and intelligent, out of the various schemes of art that fill the air. He has attacked the dual problem of the function of the artist and of the proper realm of his effort in the mechanized society which is the present environment. First, he has essayed the medium of mural painting, adapted to the structural-steel and stone architecture which is the order of the day. Since "easel painting" has nothing to say, apparently, to the walls, rooms, cities we now live in, he bids this medium farewell, consigning it to the lifeless halls of museums. (Most of us may cling to "easel painting," as to chamber music or violin sonatas, saying that great art obliterates walls; Billings, in his interesting evolution, abandons it.) Second, he has with great adventurousness managed to plant himself and his huge murals in the upper reaches of a modern skyscraper, towering over the very heart of the geometrical city, as if to say: "This is where we belong! Here is our field of operation!"

The gigantic pictures on view in the Squibb building, twenty-sixth story, during the weeks of February and early March, 1931, are memorable things and offer a significant contrast to the style of murals given by Benton and Orozco, further downtown, at the New School for Social Research. They are all faithful variations on the theme of the great machinery which rules our world, and soberly entitled: Corliss Steam Engine, Generator, Locomotive, Tools of Precision, etc. The treatment is "flat" and in deliberately subdued color values for the sake of not breaking up walls. Despite certain perceptible deficiencies or lacunae in several of the pictures, which may be summed up as the want of enough plastic interest, variety, intensity—deficiencies which the talents of the painter promise to remedy as he develops and adjusts himself to the new medium—the degree of success in the whole experiment is formidable. Tools of Precision, a triangular design in tones of gray and overlaid gold leaf, is the lovely interplay of forms; while Stamping-Press and Locomotive accumulate a colossal effect of energy through brilliant organization. But there is another aspect of these pictures which is of immense importance.

Painting in this century, notably French painting, had felt the new need of abstraction, of the geometrical and the primitive. But its adventure had terminated in what Valéry calls the "too pure zones"; and it retraced its steps, as from a blind alley. Billings, with geometrical and primitive feeling, goes to the fountainhead of allegory and attaches his painting to a symbolism—machinery, in itself abstract and geometrical.

Henry Billings is ostensibly no Bolshevist; but his brush has been terribly truthful and speaks to us without romanticism of the new Frankensteins which are the strange culmination of some two centuries of industrialism. These monsters have no human values in their eye; they stand there, automatic, implacable, omnipotent, in their actual relation to our own smallness and timidity. We, who peer at them, are but *quantities,* while they, with their inscrutable ends, are the moving force of the mechanized world which the Henry Fords have attempted to order for us. Nevertheless, this world of which Henry Billings has painted the essential symbols is one which the Fords would reject with instant horror in favor of the gentler one of the aforementioned Romneys. It is a wonder that all the big and little Squibbs do not rise up in anger to throw out Billings and his damning murals.

Paintings of machines are usually oppressive; but these at times seem neat, perfect, almost wistful. It is as if they say: *We* have no evil intentions; *we* wish only to work, to go round and round, or up and down. Now at the present moment of history the world of mechanism staggers a little; so that to be told yet of man's struggles amid his own monstrous although Billings has spoken eloquently, perhaps there is much devices.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

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Drama

The Theater of Phrases

PIRANDELLO'S new play, "As You Desire Me" (Maxine Elliott's Theater), might be and has indeed been hailed as another contribution by this Italian intellectual to what we call our theater of ideas. For one who like myself found the piece merely pretentious and tiresome, nothing could be a more forcible reminder of the difficulties we get into when we use the word "idea" in connection with the drama. I found no ideas in it at all—or rather, I found a very rudimentary idea strutting around in fine clothes. The clothes could easily be identified as coming from the shop of a fashionable phrase-maker. Here was a drama of phrases all right. But hardly a drama of ideas.

Ideas are of immense importance in the theater. I can imagine no good play being without many of them—more of them, perhaps, than the author ever knew he put into it. Shakespeare, in spite of Shaw, is crammed with ideas; and so is any playwright who has the power of interesting us and moving us. Curiously enough, the sign that a play contains ideas is that it moves us. The ideas may be great or small, old or new, but it is certainly they that produce our excitement. Not that we could go away and say just what the ideas were—put them, I mean, into prose. They have not the quality of epigrams. They are the sort of ideas, in short, which can exist only in dialogue. They are capable of being translated into the mysterious language of action and feeling. A character is an idea, a conflict is an idea. A moral never is.

Pirandello's play is stuck with a big and obvious moral—one large, abnormal clove. Pull that out and the meat must lose its savor, since there are no further ideas inside to season it as it might be seasoned. The moral is put into words—oh, many times—and runs somewhat to this effect: that if you can only believe me to be what I think I am, then I am what I think. The heroine is a woman with two pasts, one bad and one good. The good one came first, naturally enough; the bad one came after an invasion of her Italian home during the war, when she was violated by the invaders and suffered the loss of her reason, or at any rate of her memory. Now, after ten dissolute years in Germany, she is recognized for the person she used to be—the virtuous wife of a citizen of Milan—and is taken back to her husband. But the husband can never quite be sure that she is she. An insane woman has been found who meets the tests of identity much better; and then there are just plain doubts. Well, perhaps she is not the woman in question. We are permitted to doubt it ourselves, or even to be certain on the negative side. But the point of the play is that if the husband would only believe in her—which it happens that he cannot—she in her soul would be giving him what he had lost ten years ago. He might possess the body of a strange woman, but, given time, her soul by study and contemplation might verily become the substance of her who is gone.

The failure of the play is the failure to make all this doctrine either credible or palatable. It is so obviously a truth that is being thrust at us that with our customary perversity we refuse to accept it. And the reason for our refusal, I think, is that the truth has been put into words. Had it come in the form of action, in the form of feeling, we should have accepted it without knowing that we did so, and waited for some commentator to tell us what we had accepted. Pirandello is his own commentator; so we resist him. I did so at any rate, being entirely unmoved by the performance. The fact

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that audiences continue to come away from the theater as they came away that night, charged with emotion, can mean therefore only two things: either that I was wrong in being unmoved, or that they thought they ought to be moved by the great Pirandello and consequently were. The acting of Judith Anderson as The Unknown One (the capitals are Pirandello's) was accomplished but cold.

The acting of Eva Le Gallienne as Marguerite in the Civic Repertory Theater's revival of "Camille" is certainly accomplished, and is as certainly not cold. Neither does any warmth seem to have gone out of the body of this play, which, preposterous enough at certain points, was written by Dumas so directly, so honestly, so simply, and so wholly with the emotions of Marguerite and Armand in mind that it survives in spite of everything. Believe as you will that there was never any need for the sacrifice which Marguerite made of her lover, the consequences of that sacrifice remain as pitiful as ever they were. I have not seen Miss Le Gallienne do better work, nor have I seen her better supported by her company. Week in and week out, New York's best acting is to be seen on Fourteenth Street.

"In the Best of Families," a farce by Anita Hart and Maurice Braddell (Bijou Theater), is a mystery play, the question being which of five possible men is the father of an illegitimate child. The only one of the five who is never suspected turns out, of course, to be guilty. I have seldom heard so much vulgarity in two hours.

MARK VAN DOREN

Films

Glories of the "Epic"

SPEAKING by and large, it is a good thing for the movies that now and again a Hollywood company turns to a historical subject and produces an "epic." The triteness of so many film comedies and dramas, though inherent in their stories, would have bulked less prominently if their main characters had been shown against a background of active humanity. At least, the advantage of the "epic" method has been demonstrated in a number of films in which the employment of large masses of people shifted the interest from the central figures to the mass action that surged around them.

It is true, when Hollywood turns to the masses it never does so for their own sake, never treats them as a compact organism welded together by common interests and sentiments. Pictures like "Potemkin," "Grass," or even "The Silent Enemy" are not made in Hollywood. The Hollywood practice is to keep the masses on the fringes of the plot, using them only for spectacular effects or merely as a background for the principal characters. Even so the employment of large numbers of people actively participating in the progress of the story is a cinematic virtue. It creates opportunities for sweeping movement, adds swing and intensity to the action, and at the same time avoids the pitfalls of the cheap psychology that usually distinguishes the central characters.

"Cimarron" (Globe), the latest "epic" on Broadway, is a case in point. Like its numerous predecessors in this genre, it takes for its subject the thrills and turmoils of the pioneering era. It departs, however, from the type of story made almost traditional by "The Covered Wagon" in that instead of a single episode such as a trek across the country with all the hardships and adventures involved, it depicts the rise of a modern community out of the wilderness of an Indian territory. The scenes describing the life in the new settlement form the best

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part of the picture and are both exciting and informative. Here we get not only the familiar trimmings of the romance of the Wild West with its gun play and lawlessness, but also an insight into the life of a bustling, go-getting community that is highly typical of the American scene and has the quality of national uniqueness. The episode of a church service in a gambling hall, the setting up of a newspaper to defend and promote civic righteousness, the trial of a prostitute whose presence in the settlement rouses the ire of respectable wives provide a vivid illustration of the characteristic methods of grappling with these problems of communal life which belong exclusively to this country. But just as the picture of the growing community with its variety of types and swift action is rich in human interest and captivating in panoramic imagery, the story of the principal character around which the film is built seems by comparison lacking in substance and at times even crudely conventional. The heroic exploits of Yancey Cravat, the public-spirited lawyer with the steady hand of a crack shot and the crusader's urge for "empire-building," belong more properly to the traditional romance of the Western film and seem out of place in this sober and realistic setting. But for these heroics and the disappointingly flat ending, "Cimarron" might have been a truly remarkable picture. As it is, it is only interesting.

Of "The Fighting Caravans" (Rialto) one cannot say even this. The mysteries of the Hollywood mind are beyond human probing. But there is something baffling in the misuse of opportunities that is exemplified in this picture. With all the money spent on this film one might have expected at least a touch of originality in its story and treatment. It does no more, however, than rehash an old theme, almost repeating the recent "epic" "The Big Trail," in comparison with which it is much less competent and infinitely more inept.

ALEXANDER BAKSHY

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